BING

WINTER 2005

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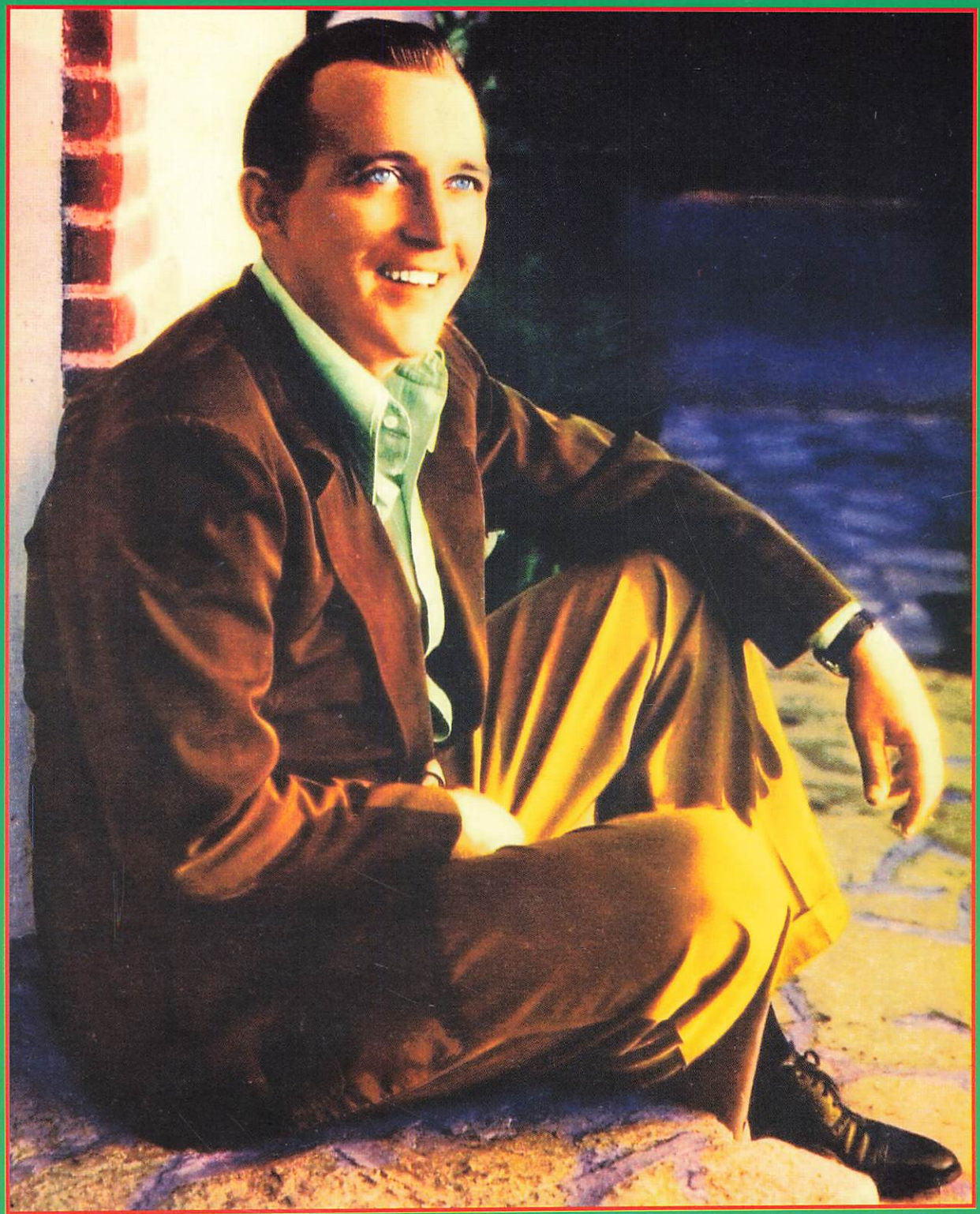

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

Web sites:

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BING magazine:	http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:	www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

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Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

An amazing thing happened this past August, due to a Wall Street Journal review by Nat Hentoff of the SHOUT! Factory "Swingin' With Bing" 3 CD box set. Bing Crosby garnered yet another hit album! Within hours of the publication of this review on August 9th, sales on Amazon.com skyrocketed. That day, "Swingin' With Bing" was the #9 best selling album in ALL of music offered at Amazon.com in every genre! Swingin' placed in the top 10 between new releases by a couple of country and pop divas – Faith Hill and Tina Turner. By the following day, the album shot up to #6 in overall sales, to #4 in pop music sales, and all the way up to #1 in jazz music sales! The album is both a critical and commercial success. It seems fitting that the man who brought Bing so much acclaim in the 1970's, Ken Barnes, is continuing to do so thirty years later. Ken deserves all of our heartfelt thanks and congratulations for a job well done, as does Nat Hentoff for giving the album a shot in the arm with some helpful national publicity. Nat's article is reproduced later in this issue.

I'd like to take this opportunity to heartily recommend Ken's latest Crosby project to one and all. "Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson: The Complete Radio Duets (and some fine solos too)", a 2-CD set, is now out on the Sepia label. If you loved last years' "Swingin' With Bing" radio performance box set, you're sure to love this new release. Jon Oye takes a more detailed look at the set on a subsequent page.

I hope many of you were able to attend the performance by our honorary President of "Kathryn Crosby Remembers Bing" at Feinstein's at the Regency on December 5th. By the time you read this, the event will have taken place. I'm sure it was very well received. I note that many of you attended the 40th annual Leeds dinner & meeting and helped to make it a tremendous success. Congratulations to my fellow ICC management team members for all of your hard work in reaching this milestone.

Be sure to watch TCM (Turner Classic Movies) in the USA this December. Thanks to Martin McQuade's efforts, our man is the star of the month. And what an appropriate month it is to honor the voice of Christmas by screening some of his most beloved movies!

Let me close by wishing all of you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Greg Van Beek

Thanks, Greg. And it's particularly nice to be able to acknowledge Greg on this occasion because he had a lucky escape when his car hit a deer in October. No real damage to Greg or the deer but his car had to have extensive repairs.

We have been almost overcome by the volume of material for this issue, so much so that we have had to defer Keith Parkinson's A-Z section until our next issue. The marvellous film festival at the Lincoln Centre in New York has had an enormous impact and we fully review this with the help of the man who was behind it - Martin McQuade. Martin deserves the thanks of us all for his hard work on the festival and on all his other Bing related activities.

George O'Reilly mounted a most successful event in Dublin in October which attracted almost 1000 people proving that there is still an audience for Bing 28 years after his demise. The Irish television station, RTE, is to show a half-hour documentary about George and his involvement with Bing on December 30.

The ICC's Leeds event was notable for the attendance of Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, and we were delighted to learn that she has written a book about her Uncle Bing. Further details appear on a subsequent page.

Norman Wolfe's book - *Troubadour* - was still being distributed as we went to press but already I have received favourable comments.

So there is plenty going on and a lot for you to read. Out thanks to Greg Van Beek for supplying the back cover from his collection.

All the best for the holidays!

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

At the time of compiling this report your secretary, editor and respective wives have just returned from a three-week vacation in the southwestern USA. Having shared a three-day visit to Las Vegas we went our separate ways and inevitably Malcolm and I sought out the Bing interest as we journeyed around Arizona and associated states. Bing is not entirely forgotten as we discovered his CDs and DVDs in Borders, Barnes & Noble and Tower Records. CDs numbered between 4 and 10 at each location and the new DVD of *Anything Goes* (1956) was on prominent display as a new release.

My 40th Leeds tribute was a joyous affair and it was a privilege to have the support and attendance of a member of Bing's family for the first time. Carolyn Schneider (Bing's niece) travelled from Las Vegas to reveal her interesting thoughts on Bing's legacy and her passion for accuracy and telling the truth about Bing's activities was a strong feature of her speech. Carolyn was supported by her husband Dirk and her speech and a report on Leeds will feature later in this issue of Bing.

Here, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Judy Schmid, Malcolm, Ken Crossland and Arnold Pope for their contributions to the programme and for their help in making this day memorable for all attending.

NEW MEMBERS

It is a great pleasure to welcome the following new members to the ICC and I trust that in joining us, our new members will enhance their knowledge of Bing's career.

UNITED STATES

Jennifer Flynn (Nashville, Tennessee), Garland Atkins (Charlotte, North Carolina), Dennis McCracken (Salt Lake City, Utah), James Zurek (San Diego, California), Thomas Sansone (Oneida, New York), Matt Schroeder (West Allis, Wisconsin), Patti Dey (Staten Island, New York), Bridget Ptak (El Segundo, California).

ENGLAND

Leslie Miller (Dorset)

DONATIONS

The ICC is grateful for the generous donations, gifted by the following UK members:-

Harry Ross (Havant, Hampshire), Tom Hughes (Garforth, West Yorkshire), Doreen & Freddy Hubbard (Westcliffe On Sea, Essex), Ken Heason (Carlton, Nottingham), Arthur Blood (Derby, Derbyshire).

DEATHS

With much sorrow I draw members attention to the passing of the following club members.

Jim Lovell (Acton Green, London), George Adey (Wednesfield, West Midlands), Jim Moore (South Shields, Tyne & Wear).

George Adey was an enthusiastic Bing collector and equally he shared a passion for the music of Deanna Durbin. George would phone periodically and inform on his work with the Deanna society and of his occasional letters from her. We would often discuss the amazing hold, which Deanna has had on her loyal fans, especially as she has been retired for 56 Years!

Your secretary knew **Jim Moore** for over 40 years and it was always a pleasure to be in his company as Jim was humorous, fiercely defensive of Bing's good points and a loyal long standing member of the various Bing clubs.

To Hazel Moore and the families of Jim Lovell and George we extend our sincere condolences.

MEMBERSHIP 2006

Members will be pleased to learn that we are keeping the

annual fees for 2006 at the previous year's rates. We trust that this good news along with an excellent magazine and associated services (new book, calendar, annual events etc.) will encourage members to be prompt and enthusiastic in their subscription renewal.

Wig and I will be delighted to be inundated with renewal letters (with perhaps a little praise included) during the first few weeks following receipt of your winter copy of BING.

PLEASE RENEW PROMPTLY.

TROUBADOUR

Norman Wolfe's book is a refreshing and individual look at Bing's career. Every page is thought provoking, revelatory and the book is hard to put down once it has been opened. Norman asserts that after 1943, Bing did not pay sufficient attention to his artistic development as a vocal artist and thus we are forced to re-evaluate his recording career thereafter. Much more is revealed within the pages of this interesting book and if you wish to order a copy, then Wig and I will be pleased to oblige. Please hurry, as there are only a few copies left for sale.

LEEDS 2006

Date for your diary is Sunday October 1st.

Until spring 2006, my kindest regards to all members,

Michael Crampton

An Evening Remembering Bing - in Dublin

On October 30, George O'Reilly, Bing's Irish friend, presented an exclusive Crosby evening in the Mahony Hall at the Helix in Dublin. A huge crowd of almost 1000 people of all ages were there to see George feature extracts from Bing's film, television and concert appearances, digitally re-mastered for his large-screen presentation. George recounted many of his experiences in the USA, the UK and in Ireland with Bing. The programme also included rare film footage and archive material, behind-the-scenes information and stories about Bing's life and career. George first met Bing in London and their twenty-four year friendship blossomed with Bing's *A Little Bit of Irish* television special, which Bing scripted, presented and starred in for George in Dublin.

For nearly three hours the audience were held spellbound by George's narration and there was a real surprise when halfway through the evening the video presentation stopped and George took a live telephone call from Kathryn Crosby herself. Kathryn spoke to the audience and to George and there was huge applause after this wonderful interlude.

George organised the evening as a charity benefit for the National Council for the Blind. Member Derek Perkins was one of many ICC members who attended and he commented that the state of the art facilities in a wonderful location ensured that Bing's voice had never sounded so good. Michael Collins had come over from Florida to attend, Ole Meistrop and Gun Damo were there from Denmark and Lars Roth and Maria made the trip from Sweden. Everyone attending received a copy of George's specially prepared CD "Bing Crosby - The Voice of the Century" and a huge queue formed at the end of the show for George to autograph individual copies.

This was a tremendously brave undertaking by George and he deservedly received a standing ovation at the conclusion of his presentation.

Much of the evening was filmed by RTE as they are preparing a half-hour documentary about George and his involvement with Bing which is to be shown on December 30.

Our thanks go to George for all his hard work which is giving Bing so much welcome exposure.

Hurricane Katrina

We were all shocked by the dreadful damage sustained by the southern states of the USA and in particular by New Orleans. We were anxious to hear from our members there and first it was **Crissi Newton,** who lives in Louisiana, who reported that "Katrina gave southern Louisiana a thorough lashing. Thankfully, we are far enough north to dodge most of the bad stuff." This was encouraging but then we were horrified to hear from **Ron Cannatella** as follows:

". . . Donna and I lost our home to the roof-high flood waters from the storm. We are in the process of itemizing as many things as we can for insurance purposes. Our Bing library housed thousands of Crosby CDs, original posters, sheet music, photos, LPs (in acid free protective sleeves), 78 rpm sets, 45rpm sets, books, VHS tapes, DVDs, and many other precious items which are now ruined. Would any of our resident ICC experts be able to provide us with a price list on Crosby collectibles? Every item in this collection was in mint to excellent condition. Here's a basic rundown of what we had:

1) LPs: All original mint condition Decca, Capitol, Reprise, Amos, RCA, Warner, United Artists, London, BBC label pressings. Two complete mint sets of the complete Decca Bing's Hollywood series, all 32 of the Spokane label LPs, all "Broadway Intermission" LPs, four mint copies of Southern Memoir, the original Jonzo series on LP, Foreign & domestic pressings of High Tor, the complete set of radio LPs (Bing & Al..etc), all boxed sets (Musical Autobiography (four mint copies), The Longines sets, The Tom Sawyer boxed set (Argo

label)...and many others.
2) Books: All ICC magazines from 1995 through the most recent issue, All ICC books, multiple copies of every Bing book ever published (Films of...Kathryn's books...biographies...reference books...etc..)
3) 45rpm & 78 rpm sets (complete mint sets housed in protective acid free sleeves).

Ron in his Bing room before the flood.

4) Everything commercially issued on CD, DVD, VHS by Bing. All Festival Films VHS/DVD releases. All radio & rarities CDs (offered by Chick Wilson: Crosby in Command...etc)
5) Original posters framed to museum quality standards. Additional posters, lobby cards & original song sheets in acid free storage boxes.
6) Bing's autograph obtained by my Grandfather in 1976. He was on duty at the Superdome in New Orleans during Bing's visit with Archbishop Hannan. Six binders FULL of original Crosby photos from movies, TV, candids, etc...in acid free 8x10 sleeves.
7) Porcelain Bing Statue (standing on a star with his signature), Porcelain bust of Bing from the 1970s. Mechanical Bing Christmas dolls (with Christmas tree, with antique radio...etc)

Donna and I would sincerely appreciate any input from all of our resident Crosby experts as we are trying to assess the value of our precious Bing collection. On the way out when our area was being evacuated, we did manage to take the entire Jonzo CD collection and several of the rare Japanese Bing CDs with us! We are now staying with my parents in Lacombe, Louisiana.

...I've spoken with Kathryn Crosby after the storm. I transferred countless original Bing LPs onto CD for her to use during the recording sessions for her two Bing books in Louisiana a few years ago. Donna and I also entertained Kathryn at Donna's office in the Louisiana Superdome. Donna loves Bing as much as I do and showed Kathryn all of the Bing photos in her office. She was the advertising director at the Superdome, and her job there is now history along with the Superdome itself. We were just married back in June. Our bridal party danced to Bing's and Rosemary's radio duet of "True Love".

One of my radio shows was called "Sing, Bing, Sing", named for Louis Prima's original working title for "Sing, Sing, Sing." The show aired every Friday evening from 1994-2000 and featured all of Bing's music and special guests like Kathryn Crosby and Perry Como. I only managed to save a handful of those shows. Hundreds of episodes of that show and many others went down in the storm.

Perry Como was a regular guest on my radio shows, and as you know, was one of Bing's biggest fans. It seems like every time I go into our house and pry open yet another closet, I discover so many more losses! Today, I located what was once practically an entire closet full of shows from Perry Como and his musical director Nick Perito. Between Mr. C. and Nick, they saw to it that I had a copy of probably every show that Perry ever did! Mr. C. gave me singing advice all the time back then and appeared on my radio program countless times. He even serenaded my Grandmother with Happy Birthday over the telephone at my request for several years. Those tapes from he and Nick were treasures of mine! I remember talking with them after I'd receive each box of tapes, and they'd share stories and talk about the shows. My heart sank when I saw the shelves of those tapes floating in muddy water today. I've been bummed out enough about Nick Perito's recent death. He and Mr. C. were two true treasures!"

Ron Cannatella

Ron's flood damaged library.

Naturally, we were, first of all, relieved that Ron and Donna were both safe but dealing with the loss of all their possessions must be an almost insurmountable problem. Who could help them to price their Bing items? We didn't know but here in the UK, we did have a large auction of a major collection a year or two back which gave us some idea of prices although they were perhaps a little disappointing. Prices in the USA may be different to the UK and Greg Van Beek offered some thoughts to Ron as well. If any members can help, or have any spare items which they would like to offer to Ron, please write to him at P.O. Box 1031, Lacombe, Louisiana 70445 or email him at RonnieCann@aol.com

White Christmas in Boston

Boston audiences are having the opportunity to usher in the holiday season with style as Irving Berlin's beloved classic "White Christmas" is at The Wang Theatre from November 25 – December 31. Based on Bing's classic movie musical of the same name, this spectacular new stage production brings its uplifting story to a new generation in a brand new stage adaptation. Co-produced by The Wang Center for the Performing Arts and the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul, Minnesota, "Irving Berlin's White Christmas" will play alternate years at The Wang Theatre and the Ordway Center. The show made its stage debut during the 2004 holiday season in San Francisco, garnering rave reviews and establishing its status as a don't-miss holiday show.

Bing goes Shell

Remember Bing's UK advert for Shell in the 1960s? Well, the giant oil company revived it and used it at their London AGM earlier this year. Shell's reputation has been under attack from various sources recently and their use of the advert which finishes with the words "You can be sure of Shell" led to the following comments being seen in the media.

> Shell management had the audacity to commence and end the London AGM with Bing Crosby singing one of the most famous and successful advertising jingles of all time - "You can be Sure of Shell... Bing must be turning in his grave…

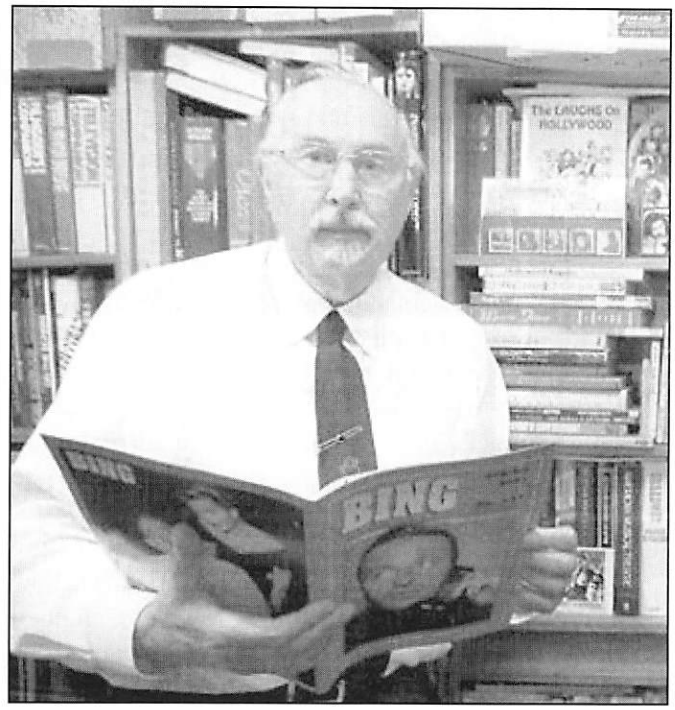
Also, the Shell forum on the Internet received a response on July 2 from a contributor called Tippi.

> How absolutely astonishing that Shell chose to play the old standard "You can be sure of Shell" (Bing Crosby) at the ST&T AGM! When will the company learn that saying something does not make it true? Whether stakeholders feel that they can be "sure of Shell" again is very much open to question. Farmers in Ireland; Royal Dutch British shareholders; activists in Nigeria etc. etc, remain very unsure of Shell indeed. Like them I will not be convinced by words (or songs) but by actions. When stakeholders are "sure of Shell" again they will tell you - and then you might like to play Bing again...

Amazing where Bing turns up.

Bing in Hampshire, UK

Remember our old friend Jim Newell? Well, out of the blue he received a phone call from the *Southern Daily Echo* newspaper in Southampton asking if they could do a feature on him and his interest in Bing. Naturally Jim agreed and the paper's Weekend Magazine for October 22-28 carried a large picture on Bing on the cover and inside was a very nice two-page article about Jim and his fascination with Bing. The paper has a wide circulation and again Bing's image will have been usefully revived. One of the photos used in the paper shows Jim holding BING magazine and we have great pleasure in reproducing this below.



And Bing in Cumbria, UK

Yes, there's more! The *Cumbria Life Magazine* celebrated its 100th edition by issuing a new magazine called "Yesterday". The September issue had a picture of Bing fishing on its cover plus an article inside. This is well worth obtaining and if you want it, contact CN Group Ltd., 51 Bank Street, Carlisle CA3 8HJ tel: +44 (0)1228 616130 – fax: +44 (0)1228 616110 – e-mail: keith.richardson@cumbrialife.co.uk,
website http://www.cumbrialife.co.uk/

Golf and Bing

Your Editor belongs to Bramhall Golf Club in Cheshire in the UK and as part of the club's arts and crafts week, I was asked to give a talk on Bing on October 4. Thinking that few people would turn up, I emphasised that I would be looking at Bing's involvement with golf

as part of this presentation in the hope of attracting a bigger audience. Despite this, I thought we would have about 20 people present and imagine my surprise to find over 70 persons crowded in to the clubhouse. What was even more pleasing was the audience response. I had put together an hour-long DVD show with highlights from Bing's films as well as some of his golfing exploits and the audience was absolutely spellbound. It is very rewarding to find that so many people still want to see and hear about Bing in the 21st. century.

Summertime and The Livin' Is Easy.....

Greg Van Beek reports on developments in his locality.

After enduring what seems like six months of bone chilling temperatures and snow showers that just won't end, summer is always a most welcome season here in southeastern Wisconsin. And with the nice weather come the outdoor festivals and fairs, which are a staple here in the Midwest.

Glen Campbell

Our local fair, the Washington County fair, which is held in Jackson, Wisconsin, took place between July 26-31. In the midst of a plethora of agricultural exhibits, farm animals, and implement dealers, each day at the fair ends with a grandstand performance by a well-known music act. On July 28th, the featured performer was Glen Campbell. Glen had a string of number one hits throughout the late 1960's and right up to the 1980's. At the height of his popularity, he appeared with Bing Crosby on the 1968 Hollywood Palace Christmas show to help launch his own TV series, the Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour, which made its debut in January 1969. In addition to taking part in a medley of yuletide favorites with Bing, the Crosby family, the Lennon Sisters and John Byner, Glen also performed a duet with Bing on a song called "The 1432 Franklin Pike Circle Hero."

Glen Campbell is one of the performers that can be heard on my friend (and fellow ICC member) David Hendrickson's radio station, 1420AM *The Breeze*, WJUB in Plymouth, Wisconsin. David was able to obtain a phone interview with Glen on July 21st to help promote the concert at our county fair. Having advance notice of this, I asked David if he could mention the Hollywood Palace show to Glen during his interview and see if he recalled working with Bing Crosby all those years ago. David reported back to me that Glen was very excited when he mentioned the show, saying how much he wished he could be able to see it again. After mentioning to Glen that I had a copy of the show, Glen asked David if it would be possible for us to bring a copy to the show. He gave David the name of his tour manager, saying that he would be able to take us backstage to meet him before the show.

In the meantime, I ran off a video copy of the complete show for Glen, and also transferred the audio of their duet of 1432 Franklin Pike Circle Hero to compact disc for him. David and I got to the fair about two hours before show time and eventually went backstage.

In only a few minutes, the Rhinestone Cowboy himself stepped out of a trailer and walked over to the tent. He greeted David and I warmly, shaking our hands. He was taller than I expected, and looked much younger than his 69 years. He was wearing sunglasses and a T-shirt that said "Grandpa's Stars", with the names of all of his grandchildren printed on it. He kindly posed for a photo with us, and signed the cover of his "greatest hits" CD for me, which I brought along. Amazingly, Glen had no concessions whatsoever for sale at the show. Usually performers have a booth where their staff hawk merchandise like T-shirts, posters, photos, CD's, etc. Glen had none of that. Not even the customary 8x10 glossies to sign for his fans backstage.

Bing and Glen on the Hollywood Palace Show.

Glen was touched and most grateful when I presented to him the video copy of the 1968 Hollywood Palace Christmas show and the audio CD of his duet with Bing. When I handed him the CD with the title of the song printed on it, I asked if he remembered that particular tune. He replied "oh wow, no I don't remember that song at all", but said he was looking forward to hearing it again and seeing the show. He had fond memories of Bing, although I don't think he recalled too much about the TV show itself. His memories of Bing are centered more around the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, which Glen told us he's played in every year since 1968 and will be playing in again this February. I mentioned that one of my favorite non-golf moments from the televised portion of the pro-am was the last time Phil Harris appeared at the tournament, in 1993, and how he, accompanied by Glen on guitar,

performed an impromptu rendition of "Bare Necessities", Phil's famous song from Disney's *The Jungle Book*. That brought a smile to Glen's face and he chuckled at that particular memory of Phil, saying "Oh man, Phil Harris, what a character. God rest his soul."

David and I chatted for about 10 minutes with Glen, and then moved on to let other fans waiting patiently have their own meet and greets. Stepping out of the tent, we chatted a bit with Glen's tour manager, who said he would have their car ready at the back of the stage so Glen could just jump in after the performance and the two could head down to Chicago where they were staying. He also mentioned to us that Glen will be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame during this year's Country Music Association awards ceremony in November.

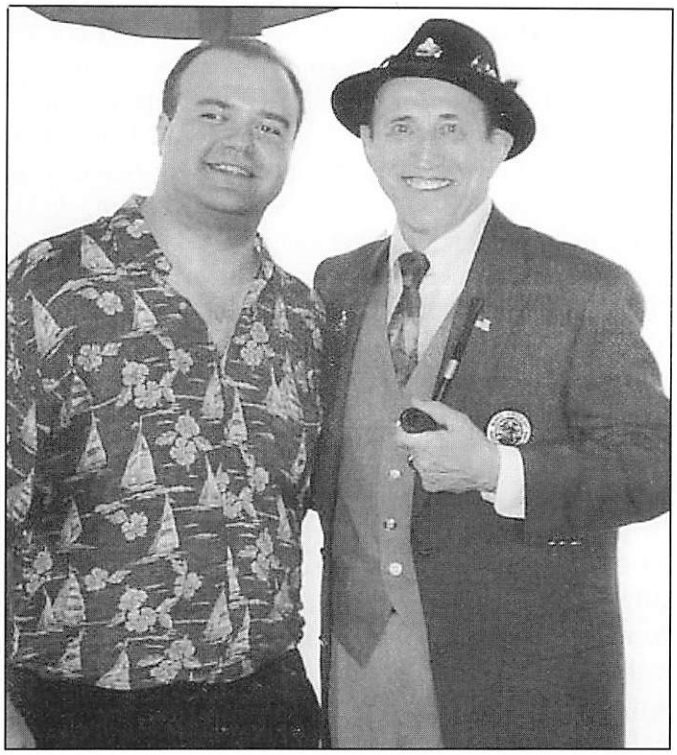
Glen gave a marvelous performance that night. He was in fine voice, singing as well as he did thirty years ago. He covered all of his biggest hits, and then some, including the song he performed during his solo all those years ago on the Hollywood Palace with Bing... "The Wichita Lineman." He's an amazing musician, showing his prowess on guitar by playing the William Tell Overture at a fast tempo, while holding the guitar above his head. It's worth noting that prior to his success as a singer, he was a much sought after studio musician, playing guitar on classic recordings like Frank Sinatra's 1966 hit, "Strangers In The Night". All in all it was a wonderful night, and my thanks go out to David Hendrickson for making the meeting with Glen possible.

Milwaukee's Irish Fest

One of the other big events of the summer here in Southeastern Wisconsin was Milwaukee's Irish Fest. Held at the Henry W. Maier Festival Park on the shores of Lake Michigan, this ethnic festival ran from August 18-21. This year marked the 25th anniversary of the event and it drew a record setting crowd. 137,480 people from Milwaukee and around the world [11,000 more than 2004] took in the music, dancing, food and culture of Ireland. The President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, visited the festival for the first time and was most impressed with this wonderful celebration.

A new stage, the Celtic Roots stage, was unveiled this year to celebrate the influence of Irish culture on American popular music. The stage featured Irish and Irish-American entertainers carefully chosen to represent a snapshot of American popular music throughout the generations. The highlight for me was the 1940's segment, represented by *A Tribute To Bing Crosby* as portrayed by fellow ICC member Bob Pasch in a tremendous one-man show. Bob shares a remarkable likeness in sound, mannerisms and appearance that have made him America's best-known Bing Crosby impersonator. The show was a musical journey, spanning Bing's best-known hits. Bob performed three shows during the festival run. I was able to sit in on his show August 20th on an incredibly hot, humid Saturday afternoon. I'd known of Bob for years, but had never met him nor caught his act, so I was very much looking forward to this performance.

Despite the high humidity, the tent was over 3/4 full to catch Bob's Bing Crosby tribute. It began with an overture and a voiceover listing some of Bing's remarkable accomplishments and achievements both in and out of show business. This was followed by the familiar strains of "Where The Blue of the Night" during which "Bing" made his entrance. It made my jaw drop....Bob, complete with pipe, fedora, and green blazer embossed with the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am patch on the front pocket, looked uncannily like Bing. He's got the Crosby smile, the expressive blue eyes, and even the jutting ears. About two or three songs into his one-hour set, Bob, even though we'd never met, recognized me right away (I was seated in the second row, near center stage), came down off the stage and shook my hand in mid song. Later, he commissioned me (and two others) to join him onstage for "The Whiffenpoof Song"...to sing the Baa Baa Baa part. We three were promptly dressed in hokey sheep hats and big bow ties, and were handed posters to hold up as we sang the three Baa's. One of us was designated as the black sheep, and was given a special black hat to wear and a huge poster to hold (no, it wasn't me!). Ah show biz...isn't it great! What a Crosby fan won't all do for the cause.



Bob Pasch (as Bing) with Greg.

Bob covered most of Bing's biggest hits, along with a few other gems that were given the Crosby touch, like "Where The Morning Glories Grow", "The White Cliffs of Dover", and "When The Lights Go On Again". He

can hit those famous low notes with ease, and even managed a few whistling choruses here and there. The performance I saw was very well received. In fact, strolling along the lakefront prior to showtime, I overheard several people saying "I want to go catch that Bing Crosby tribute!" to their companions. The stage was a classy presentation in itself, with a huge photo of Bing prominently displayed. After the performance, I had the opportunity to chat with Bob and his wife/sound engineer. He conveyed to me his appreciation for all the ICC is doing for Bing, and how much he enjoys reading our publication. Well Bob, we're grateful to YOU for what you do to keep Bing's music and memory alive! My thanks to fellow ICC member Barry Stapleton for providing me with complimentary tickets to the event, and for bringing Bob and his unique tribute to Bing to Milwaukee audiences.

As I write this, the fall season is fast approaching. The unofficial end of summer is Labor Day weekend, September 3-5. David Hendrickson was looking for some special programming for *The Breeze* to air during the holiday weekend, and suggested a one hour compilation of material from the "Swingin' With Bing" CD box set, after its impressive sky rocketing sales spurt in mid-August. I utilized material from this set, along with cuts from the new Sepia "Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson" CD set to comprise the hour. It was a great way to promote both sets, especially since the Bing & Jolson compilation was released September 13th. The following weekend, on September 10th, David ventured to West Bend and visited the Crosby room of my home, where I screened some song excerpts from the Hollywood Palace for him. We also taped a few introductions and interview segments to air before the daily "Bing Sings" feature for the week of September 19th, as we featured a different song from the Bing & Al Sepia release each day that entire week. We're also planning on putting together a one-hour Bing Crosby Christmas Special to air on *The Breeze* during December, in addition to my 4th annual Club 60 Bing Crosby Christmas Show with Tom Shanahan on WTKM radio.

Blue Rose

On September 12th, a glowing review appeared in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel newspaper of a new Milwaukee Repertory Theater production titled *Blue Rose: The Rosemary Clooney Story,* which was running at the Stackner Cabaret from September 10th through November 6th. Both David Hendrickson and I read the review with great interest, and I suggested he try contacting the singer-actress who portrays Clooney, Katherine Strohmaier, for an interview to help promote the show on WJUB radio. Ms. Strohmaier was most excited at the prospect, and the interview took place September 29th. David told Katherine and the Milwaukee Rep's PR manager Cindy Moran about me and my work with the ICC, and a pair of complimentary tickets were left for us at the box office for the October 6th performance.

The Stackner Cabaret is a unique style venue. With maximum seating capacity of just over 100, it's an ideal setting for a production such as this. Indeed when Katherine sang "Love You Didn't Do Right By Me" during her *White Christmas* medley (which also included "Count Your Blessings", "Snow", "Sisters" and the title song), the scene was very reminiscent of the setting of the number in the film, where Bing too was seated at a round cocktail table watching Rosemary as "Betty" perform this smouldering ballad.

The 90 minute show was divided into two acts comprising some two dozen-plus songs spanning the Clooney career from the earliest days with her sister Betty right up to her comeback and Concord Jazz years. Katherine Strohmaier, who is the spitting image of Clooney both vocally and visually, is supported by pianist-singer Paul Helm. Together, they tell the story of Clooney's career and personal life through the songs she made famous, such as "Tenderly", "Mambo Italiano" and "Hey There". The songs are linked by monologues that fill in the details, divided into distinct chapters.

A polished production with over a half-dozen costume changes, several songs associated with Bing were performed including "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams", "In The Cool, Cool, Cool of The Evening", "On A Slow Boat To China", in addition to those from *White Christmas*. At one point, when discussing the production of that film, a voice impersonating Bing was heard, reassuring "Rosie" that everything would work out fine. At this same time, a huge, almost lifesize photo of Bing & Rosemary was wheeled out from the side of the stage and put in the spotlight. Later, when discussing Rosemary's comeback in 1976 as a result of Bing's concert tour, a huge headshot of Bing, circa 1964, was wheeled out in similar fashion.

The highlight for me was "Bing & Rosie's C&W Medley", as it appeared on the song list provided to us prior to the show. The title alone intrigued me. I was amazed when it turned out to be a verbatim recreation of the "jazz-waltz tempo" country-western medley Bing & Rosie performed together on Bing's February 1964 CBS TV special! Every nuance was skillfully recreated by Katherine and her pianist (taking Bing's vocal), from "Don't Fence Me In" right through "You Are My Sunshine". Now pianist Paul Helm, with a high tenor voice, is no match for Bing, but still it was most impressive that someone took the time to meticulously recreate this intricate medley. I later learned from Katherine that the sheet music was transcribed by ear just from the audio of the original TV show!

Katherine Strohmaier was most generous and remained in costume to meet David and I after the show once the venue was cleared so that we could obtain a photograph of her for the benefit of BING readers. She

kindly posed with me onstage against the two large Bing backdrops that were wheeled out during the show (there were actually two more stationary images of Bing on the main backdrop of the set, including one with Frank Sinatra and Rosie from the Edsel show).

Katherine Strohmaier with Greg.

I brought along a few CD's of Crosby-Clooney radio shows, the Oct. 11, 1977 BBC show, Rosie & Bing at the London Palladium in 1976, and outtakes from *White Christmas* to give her as a thank-you gift, as well as a DVD of some of their TV appearances together. She was absolutely thrilled to get them, thanking me profusely. What a sweet, charming and talented performer she is. She is hoping they can take the production on the road, so be on the lookout for this highly recommended "Blue Rose" show to appear at your local repertory theater. You won't want to miss it!

So now, as the summer wind makes way for another cold spell here in southeastern Wisconsin, I hope the fall and winter seasons will prove to be equally as enjoyable and will bring more Bing-related activities to this area.

Greg Van Beek

LOOKING BACK: Club Crosby in the Thirties and Forties

Wayne Martin examines his archives.

Looking through the discolored and brittle pages of the May 1961 mimeographed issue of BINGANG (the 25th Anniversary Issue), edited by Rena Albanesi, I came across this article written by Ruth Ness, president of Club Crosby from 1947-1951. It originally appeared in the 12th Anniversary Issue of BINGANG in July 1948 and has been re-edited for inclusion in this issue of BING.

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This being our 12th anniversary, I will attempt to give you a brief history of Club Crosby and BINGANG. Unfortunately, I was not a member of the club at the beginning and have been unable to find any of our present members who were with the club at that memorable day so many years ago. Consequently, the club's beginning is lost back in the middle 1930's somewhere. I've been able to trace it back as far as 1936; hence we will call this our 12th anniversary!

In those days Kay Browning was Prexy and Syd Gath (killed in World War II) was just taking over as editor. Syd was quite an editor! I've never seen another like him. Such wit that fellow possessed! Glancing over some of the 1939 issues I noticed a fine editorial written by the one and only Bing called "Keeping Your Feet on the Ground."

Three of the 1939 issues contained fancy printed covers. In Bing's letter he explains that the covers were done by an inmate of a penitentiary who was due for parole, and the cover was helping him to find a job. About this time fan clubs were given a lot of unpleasant publicity by various publications, so the club's secretary at that time wrote a letter to Bing on behalf of the club. In it she explained that the club worked hard on their magazine, went to Bing's movies, bought his records, wrote letters, etc., and in general impressed upon him that Club Crosby was one of the few clubs "on the level" and asked "What is your honest opinion of the benefits and drawbacks of a fan club?"

Bing answered with a sincere and friendly long letter. In part it read "...The Club Crosby bunch stands out to me, both for excellence of the club paper and the sincerity of the members. Many times I am sorry we don't have a more personal contact. You know me better than I know you. I must keep busy with so many interests when I would prefer more time with my friends. Loyal fans are more important to me than the student rooting section is to the school team. When their encouragement stops, I'll know it's time to retire in favor of new talent."

Continuing with the highlights of the 1939 issues, there was a real "scoop"–an interview with the late Amelia Earhart. It was just before she took off on her latest–and last–flight.

The 1940 issues came through with splendid mimeographing and "justified" right margins, but with printing still on only one side. One article in particular, "I Knew the Family When," by member Mrs. George Munro, was very good. Mrs. Munro lived next door to the Crosbys when Bing was attending school. The Anniversary Issue this year brought a "thank you" from Bing for the "Album of Members" snapshots which we sent to him for Christmas.

Then there's the 5th Anniversary Issue in 1941. A nice snap of Bing and Dixie and the boys and an

accompanying article entitled "Meeting Bing and Dixie Lee Crosby" are highlights of the journal. Going through 1941 we find Sid Gath carrying on his usual flare for humor, although due to the fact that he was now in the Canadian Army, he had to give up his editorial duties, and Kay Browning took over that job. He still sent in articles regularly. A letter from Larry Crosby in another 1941 issue informed us that Bing was in Buenos Aires, also that "Birth of the Blues" is the new picture. With this issue, they started to print on both sides of the paper, and that turned out splendidly. There are four or five nice poems in that issue.

In 1942 clever scrapbook articles called "Speaking for Myself" by Lawrence Grennan appeared in several issues through the year. Club Crosby almost lost its balance at the end of 1942 when Kay Browning had to give up as editor due to her regular job. After many months of reorganization Willowdean Wheeler took over, and a small issue came out in the summer of 1943. There was a nice snap of Bing and Bob Hope. *[Editor's note:* In those days the pictures were actual snapshot prints which were individually pasted into each copy of the journal.*]* A "Service Honor Roll" page was added, featuring a member in the service in each issue. The Christmas issue had many drawings and good articles.

1944 brought a tremendous increase in membership and continually nice journals. Our British branch started that year. There was a nice article about Bing's brother Bob by the prexy of his fan club. A soldier in Saipan wrote of his impressions of Bing and was typical of so many service men's opinions and impressions.

The first issue of 1945 of course carried praises for Bing's winning of the Academy Award in March of that year for his splendid performance in *Going My Way* in 1944. We fairly burst with pride that year! I went to Hollywood in 1945, and the trip was written up in the journal. Gordon Atkinson appears in this issue with an article about his meeting with Bing when he was on leave in Hollywood from the Canadian Army.

1946 found Willowdean giving up her editing job to Philomena Vendetti. There was s nice letter from Bing thanking the members for the birthday gifts sent to him – a pen and pencil set and a leather briefcase. I was vice-president then and enjoyed doing a "Shall We Get Acquainted?" column. Our Canadian branch was organized, and Gordon did miracles with it. We joined the Modern Screen Fan Club Association that year. Bing thanked us for the rosaries that members sent to children in Greece and for our Sister Kenny donation. "Club Crosby Minutes" was introduced that year. A questionnaire from Dixie Lee Crosby proved to be the most popular article with the members. Our Syd Gath Memorial was started in the form of a raffle and the money sent to a Veterans Hospital.

Bringing you to the homestretch now: In 1947 I took over as president of the club. We had many nice compliments about the issues. Our articles and drawings began to win points in MSFCA. We introduced a record page, and a "Peek at the Members" page, then a Broadway column, Chicago column, and a series called "Crosbyana." And we added something that BINGANG had never had before: a Table of Contents.

Ruth Ness

(Editor: Thanks, Wayne for researching the article. Philip F. Crossland of Wilmington, Delaware also sent us a copy of an article by Walker W. Smith of Vienna, Virginia that appeared in the October issue of Reminisce magazine. It makes nice reading.)

Bing Crosby Was 'Regular Army' to These GIs

by Walker W. Smith, Vienna, Virginia.

During World War II, I was personnel sergeant major in Headquarters Company, XII Corps, which was the spearhead for General George Patton and his 3rd Army's dash across south France, Luxembourg and Germany.

In September 1944, our unit was bivouacked in a deserted French army camp in the eastern France town of Commercy. One evening, I was walking with my GI towel over my shoulder when I saw a man bent over, washing his hands by the enlisted men's mess tent. As I neared him, he said, "Hey, soldier, can I borrow your towel?

I knew all the men in our company but did not recognize him. After looking, I saw that he was none other than Bing Crosby. After I got over my amazement, we shook hands and chatted a bit. He dried his hands and thanked me, and I went on my way.

The next morning, Bing, wearing a floppy hat and Army ODs with no insignia or other ID, lined up as the last man in the chow line. When Bing got near the food, the GI serving the chow asked him curtly, "Hey, soldier, where's your mess kit?"

In a slangy way, Bing replied, "Ain't got any? Where is yours?"

The soldier barked back, "What are you, a smart...? What's your name?"

"The name is Crosby," he said, "but everyone calls me Bing."

Bing said later that the man almost passed out, then stammered, "Sorry, Mr. Crosby," running out to get a mess kit.

A couple of days later, Bing again showed up at the enlisted men's mess for breakfast and was given a royal

welcome this time. As Bing was eating, an officer came rushing in and said, "Bing, we've been waiting for you to eat with us at the officers' mess. The general is eating with us today."

Looking up at the officer, Bing replied, "I've been spending a lot of time with you stuffed shirts. Now I want some time with the working men. Give the general and other officers my regrets."

Of course, Bing became a big hit with our outfit. We all thought he was a real regular guy.

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal price. Also, there are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances. Finally, Michael has spare copies of some LP boxed sets of Bing material and he will be happy to make these available for nominal figures to members.

Terry Cunningham, Hampshire, UK (Tel: 01243 371859)

FOR SALE

Terry offers the complete "Bing's Hollywood" set of 15 LPs on the Brunswick label. Best offer accepted - he would like these to go to a good home. All in fair to good condition.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

Footlight Records www.footlight.com

For your Bing needs on CD and Vinyl. Please note that Footlight in New York is now an Internet only business. e-mail: info@footlight.com

"Bing" Latimer, DeKalb, Illinois 60115, USA.

Mr. Latimer's daughter writes:
"My elderly father has been collecting Bing Crosby memorabilia since he was a child. In fact, his nickname is "Bing" because he was a singer resembling Bing's style and looks. He would now like to find a good home for his collection (mainly records).
23 ORIGINAL albums of 78 rpm records (4 records per album)
8 Bing Crosby Storage albums 12 – 78 rpm records each

24 Bing Crosby Storage albums 8 – 78 rpm records each

1 Bing Crosby Storage Album 10 – 78 rpm records

2 Life Story Books

Total: 382 – 78 rpm records or 764 sides – all playable"

Contact Mr. Latimer in care of his daughter Colette Rinn of Western Springs, Illinois 60558 at 708-246-1826 or e-mail at crinn@lw210.org

Danny O'Sullivan, 21 Pinfold Lane, Norton Canes, Cannock, Staffs, WS11 9PH, UK (phone 01543 278475).

"I have approx. 218 Bing 78s plus 47 magazines (The Crosby Collector and The Crosby Post) from the 1960s to 1970s, most in excellent condition. Also a collection of cassette tapes, and maybe some spare LPs. Due to health problems I do not play my 78s now, but would like to pass them and the other items on to a Bing fan, rather than sell them, to enjoy them as much as I have. If anyone is interested please contact me, only thing is they would have to be collected."

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR, UK (Tel: 0121-359-7399, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs (and LPs) contact Ray.

Redmond Nostalgia Company, P O Box 82, Redmond, WA 98073-0082, USA. (Tel: (425) 774-1819, Fax (425) 774-8076, web site: http://www.redmondnostalgia.com/

e-mail: redmondnostalgia@aol.com)

David Kiner offers a comprehensive list of 281 Bing Crosby CDs. Each CD is one hour long containing two 30 minute radio programs, unless otherwise noted. All programs have been professionally re-mastered for excellent sound quality. All CDs are professionally printed and come sealed in cases with printed inserts.

See the company's web site for details of what is available.

Philippa Walsh, 68 Orton Rd., Northern Moor, Manchester M23 0PS, UK (e-mail: philippawalsh@hotmail.co.uk, Tel: [after 6 p.m.] 0161 613 8964)

Philippa has a Bing Crosby porcelain bust (pictured) which belonged to her late father and she wonders if any of our readers would like to buy it. There are no markings of a maker underneath, but there is a serial number: B5F62, which has been stamped on the underneath of it. The height of the bust is 12" from the top of the hat to the base, and the diameter of the hat (not the brim) is 24.5". Please make offers direct to Philippa.

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone:1-800-742-6663) http://www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for imported CDs from the UK and elsewhere.

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 426 Park Place Drive, Petaluma, California 94954-6647, USA (tel. [707] 762-5570 - e-mail bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net –

website:

www.geocities.com/one_sonoma_rose/BingsHomePage.html?11211 36749218)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:

www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

£2.90 (UK)
IN TUNE
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THE ONLY MONTHLY MAGAZINE IN THE WORLD FOR LOVERS OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF POPULAR MUSIC
CBS
BING CROSBY AND AL JOLSON
- Ken Barnes tells the story of their radio shows together
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CURTAIN UP - CD and BOOK REVIEWS and much more
No 163
SEPTEMBER 2005

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698

e-mail: gerry@stonestreet13.freeserve.co.uk,

website: www.GnuDawn.co.uk/intune) Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £17.40 for the UK, £21 for Europe and £30 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended. The September issue had a major feature on the new Bing & Al Jolson CD.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk

e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - one of Britain's favourite vocalists. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A "*must*" for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Denis Holland, 84A Wolverhampton Rd., Stafford ST17 4AW, UK (phone: 01785 213987).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(web site: http://www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/ - see also http://www.mikescaife.btinternet.co.uk/ for Mike Scaife's Scottish branch)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.btinternet.com/~flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs Margaret Cummings, National Secretary, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683,
website: www.sinatra-ms.com/Sinatra.html)
Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

1. Me and Uncle Bing

by Carolyn Schneider.

Bing's niece, Carolyn, the daughter of Mary Rose Pool, has written what she describes as a journal of sorts, recounting tales of the forty year bond that existed between her and her illustrious Uncle. She takes us to Los Angeles during the peak of Bing's career as she gets a taste of Hollywood life and show business. Time spent with Bing and Dixie and their four boys, as well as the rest of the Crosby clan, helps set the stage for Carolyn's future. The book has over 100 photos, many from the private collections of the Crosby family.

If you want to reserve your copy, autographed by the author, write to Carolyn Schneider, White Feather Distributing Company, 9811 W. Charleston Blvd. #2-185, Las Vegas, Nevada 89117 (phone: 702-240-2479). You will be under no obligation to purchase and full information will be mailed to you as soon as the exact date of publication and price is known. The book will be available in both hard cover and paperback. Members in the UK, Ireland and Europe should advise Malcolm Macfarlane if they wish to reserve a copy and the ICC will have a special shipment sent over to the UK for separate distribution.

2. Troubadour: Bing Crosby and the Invention of Pop Singing.

Norman Wolfe's book was still being distributed as we went to press and we shall have reviews and comments in our next issue. We received 265 orders initially and as a result, we had 300 copies printed. There a few left and if you want one, contact Michael Crampton or Wig quickly.

3. Australian Chart Book 1940-1969

We highlighted this book by David Kent in our last issue and we wondered which of Bing's hits had reached No. 1. **Graham Pascoe** from Bathurst in New South Wales was quick to give us more information.

"David Kent's new book is the result of a tremendous amount of research from which he has retrospectively compiled our pop music charts. Needless to say, the Crosby entries are impressive: three pages of songs which Bing recorded are listed as having reached the charts in those three decades with 228 in the 1940s and 1950s. Twenty-seven of the 228 reached the number one position, as follows:

'I Don't Want To Walk Without You', 'White Christmas' (both 1943); 'Pistol Packin' Mama', 'Vict'ry Polka' (both 1944); 'Long Ago (And Far Away)', 'It Could Happen To You', 'Amor, Amor', 'Swinging On A Star', 'I'll Be Seeing You', 'Don't Fence Me In' and 'Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral' (all 1945); 'A Friend Of Yours', 'On The Atchison, Topeka And The Santa Fe', 'Symphony', 'Sioux City Sue' (all 1946); 'You Keep Coming Back Like A Song', 'The Anniversary Song', 'They Say It's Wonderful', '(There's No Business Like) Show Business (all 1947); 'Now Is The Hour' (1948); 'Far Away Places', 'Riders In The Sky' (1949); 'The Four Winds And The Seven Seas', 'Quicksilver' (1950); 'All My Love' (1951); 'Some Enchanted Evening' (1952); 'Around The World (1957).

In 1945 Bing had the number one song in every month except January. David points out that there were no official charts here until the late 1950s and hit parade lists recorded only the song titles and not the particular versions of songs. He has used sales data and other sources to compile his charts. Where more than one version was available, such as 'Some Enchanted Evening' (by Bing and Ezio Pinza), he has included both in his lists.

In the 1960s, Bing (with Satchmo) was charted with 'Dardanella' in 1960 and 'Do You Hear What I Hear?' in 1963. David's earlier book covered 1970 to 1992 and the only single listed for Bing is 'That's What Life Is All About' in 1976."

4. Star-Spangled Radio

Also in our last issue (pages 33/34), we mentioned how Bing came to broadcast to Germany in 1944 and Geoff Milne has now alerted me to a book called *Star-Spangled Radio* by Edward M. Kirby and Jack Harris which was published in 1948 and which also covers the event. Here's an extract:

... Oliver Nichols with ABSIE came to SHAEF to see if Crosby would broadcast to the Germans in their own language.

Bing had a tight schedule in personal appearances and broadcasts before the troops on the continent and he didn't speak German. To learn it parrot fashion would take too much time. So Nichols came up with the idea of spelling it out phonetically from which Bing could read.

In just about fifteen minutes Bing had mastered it and this is how he came to be known as "Der Bingle."

Talk spelled out phonetically (accent is indicated in CAPS):

Hahl-LOH, DOIT-Sheh Zohl-DAH-ten!
Heer Shpreekht Bing CROS-by.
Eekh KOHM-meh zoh-AYBEHN. . . . Ouse Ah-MEH-ree-kah,
dehm LAHN-deh . . . voh NEE-mahnd Zeekh . . . fohr dehr Geh-SHTAH-poh FUERKH-tehn mooss–voh YEH-dehr-MAHNN
dee FRY-HIGHT haht . . . Tzoo ZAH-gen oond tzoo SHRY-ben vahs ehr vill.
Eekh KORM-meh Ouse dehm LAHN-deh LIN-kohln's, voh ehss KY-neh HEHR-ren . . . Oond KY-neh KNEH-khteh gibt.
Eekh HOHF-feh, dahss OON-zeh-rah REH-khteh . . . oond OON-zeh-reh FRY-HIGH-ten Oukh bahld VEE-dehr . . . in OI-rehm LAHN-deh EYN-TZOOK HAHL-ten VEHR-den;
dah-FUER KEMP-fen veer Ah-meh-ree-KAH-nehrr–AH-behr Eekh been neekht heer oom tzoo oikh tzoo PREH-dee-gen, ZOHN-dehrn fuer Oikh eyn PAH-ahr LEE-dehr tzoo ZEEN-gen.

Translation:
Hello, German soldiers! This is Bing Crosby speaking to you. I just came from America, the country where nobody needs to be afraid of a Gestapo–where every man enjoys the same liberty to say and write whatever he wishes. I come from the land of Lincoln where there is no master, no slave. I honesty hope that our liberties and rights shall soon return again to your own country; for this, we Americans are fighting for–but I am not here to preach to you, I am here to sing a few songs.

It was Bob Musel, "United Press" and "Variety" correspondent in London whose story on the event described Bing as "Der Bingle" as Variety reported on September 6, 1944.

The Allies opened up on the Nazis with a new secret weapon from London, this week, according to Bob Musel, "United Press" and "Variety" correspondent in London whose story on the weapon broke, Monday. The new counter attack to the V2 was Der Bingle, sometimes known in the States as Bing Crosby and now, overseas, for morale work. He talked and sang in a recorded broadcast by an American broadcasting station in Europe, beamed to Germany. Der Bingle, who, according to Musel, is a great favorite with the Germans, took off first in a snappy chat to the Wehrmacht, astonishing front line observers by using reasonably good German. Der Bingle who doesn't speak German was asked to explain how come. "I do it with phonetics," he said. Consulting his phonetic chart, according to Musel, Crosby started off with, "Hello, German soldiers, here speaks Bing Crosby, I've just arrived from America, the country where nobody is afraid of the Gestapo and where everybody has a right to say and write what he thinks." Rippling through the Teutonic guttural, the Bingo told the Germans about constitutional rights and what Americans fight for, then he signaled his pianist and said, "I didn't come here to preach, I came to sing a few songs." It was beautiful psychological warfare, wrote Musel. A passing typist, asking what was going on in the studios, was told it was Crosby singing to the Nazis, had a different comment. "To the Nazis," she exclaimed, incredulously, "what kind of punishment is that?"

BING-ING AROUND

Pete Cakanic's back!

We often discuss how to promote the Bing Crosby legacy. Write and call editors, disc jockeys, and TV and movie executives. Maybe set up a display at a school or library.

In Louisville, KY. Bill Fowler, now 75, goes a few steps further. He becomes BING CROSBY. In appearance he has a striking resemblance to Bing, about the same height and build as the mature Bing. He uses a little plumber's putty to wing his ears out Bing-like. When appearing he wears a blue blazer, polka dot bow tie and a plaid sport hat cocked at a jaunty angle. But he has something most of us don't. Talent and a voice good enough to emulate Bing's singing. It's not a caricature. He's a baritone, not as deep as Bing, but he captures the nuances of Bing's style and mannerisms and has been doing this for about 12 years.

In fact, he captures Bing so well that an elderly lady at a senior citizen center thought she had met Bing. Mr. Fowler told the director, "Oh, I have to tell her the truth. I don't want to be a fraud." But the director of the center persuaded him to let her be. "You've made her happy."

Bill Fowler as Bing.

Fowler is a retired electrical engineer. In his younger days he sang with big-bands around Louisville and he was often told he looked a little like Bing and sounded a little like him. About 12 years ago he began touring around Louisville With his ukulele and keyboard and some musician friends (even some rockers he converted to playing Bing style pop) he did his Binging on local television, woman's clubs, senior citizen widow and widower's clubs, retirement homes, wedding receptions, church events and many veterans groups.

He thinks his largest in person audience was about 200 people. The TV performance using Kraft cheese props was on a Catholic diocese owned channel. It has been repeated several times over the years. The most requested song is always "White Christmas". Often when he finishes he notices tears.

Fowler had the pleasure of meeting Bing in 1976. As he tells it, he was inspired by Bing's Father O'Malley in *Going My Way* to work with youth. He was a leader of the Explorer division of Boy Scouts of America. Whenever an opportunity arose he would play some Bing recordings for the boys. Knowing his love for Bing, he was treated to a trip to California. A local Kentucky politician with clout contacted the Governor of California who contacted Bing's office. It got him into contact with the Crosby office and he asked if Bing could do a benefit for Scouts. When Fowler told them "I'm a nobody, just a Bing fan," he was told Bing's schedule prevented the benefit, but told him he could meet Bing and sent him tickets to a rehearsal of the Bing & Friends show in 1976 at the Masonic Auditorium in San Francisco. It was the thrill of a lifetime. "I watched the rehearsal. His family was on stage as were other performers. When the break came, Bing came offstage, and introduced himself to me as if I didn't know who he was. We chatted for about ten minutes. The speaking voice was amazing; It projected as though he had microphones implanted in his throat."

Fowler says he enjoys bringing Bing to life and will continue as long as he can. But as he ages he says it's getting more and more difficult. The hard part is setting up the speakers the props and transporting them to the events. It takes about two hours to set up. "I'll do it as long as I can."

For most years he has been singing the well-known Bing classics. But recently he has been attempting the songs familiar to Bing fans but not the general public; songs such as "At My Time of Life." I'm told by many the lyrics are very touching." Fowler concludes.

Pete Cakanic

Bing and Guests Swing on the Air

As Greg Van Beek has already mentioned, The Wall Street Journal of August 9 contained a review of the CD set "Swingin' With Bing" by jazz writer Nat Hentoff and it's well worth reading.

As a child, I'd listen in my room for my mother's favorite song as, in the kitchen, she'd wait for Bing Crosby's first network radio program, and his theme, "When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day." Soon, he had gentled me to sleep.

Years later, after being immersed in jazz, I learned of the jazz credentials of the "crooner" (as he was called). As one of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys from 1926 to 1930, his roommate on the road had been the precisely lyrical cornetist, Bix Beiderbecke, with whom he had gone to after-hours jam sessions in Chicago and other cities.

In a 1976 interview, a year before he died at age 74, Bing Crosby, reminiscing, told me: "Back then, there was a color line almost anywhere else, but at those sessions you could hear Bix, Louis Armstrong and Willie 'The Lion' Smith, all mixed together. The jazz scene was way ahead of the rest of the country."

We also talked about what, starting in the 1940s, had been my favorite radio show, Bing Crosby's "Kraft Music Hall." He often had jazz guests, with whom he joined, like another swinging horn, in duets. I also greatly enjoyed his ad-libbing — with an urbane wit more sophisticated than I heard elsewhere on the air.

I asked him about his evident pleasure in playing with words. "Well," he said, "I read a lot. I'm no intellectual, you understand, but I like Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Hemingway, John P. Marquand, Louis Auchincloss, and George Simenon. He really understands character." (I had found a fellow enthusiast for that prolific and penetrating mystery writer.)

Those wondrously relaxed, and relaxing, Bing Crosby radio shows are available again on a three-CD boxed set, "Swingin' With Bing!: Bing Crosby's Lost Radio Performances" (Shout! Factory, with a list price of $49.98). Producer Ken Barnes and Peter Reynolds, a true master at remastering, have chosen 75 musical numbers, introductions and conversations from 1946 to 1953, 57 of which have never been previously released. (Along with "Kraft Music Hall" sessions, there are takes from his Philco, Chesterfield, and General Electric broadcasts.)

On the first CD, in addition to performances with Nat "King" Cole and the Andrews Sisters (a trio who could swing in Yiddish as well as English, but not in Yiddish here), there are Crosby solos. He was so easeful a swinger that even on ballads, his phrasing grooved. And because he was so comfortable with the microphone, sounding as if he were singing directly to the listener, radio made him an international star.

As Mr. Barnes says in the extensive notes to this set: "It wasn't just the public that admired him. He had the respect of the nation's greatest musicians, Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, the Dorsey Brothers....He influenced every singer who followed him, including Frank Sinatra."

Jazz performers were eager to be on his radio shows because of the size of the audiences, but also because Bing was one of them. The second and third CDs include all the Crosby radio duets with Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald. And for good jazz measure, there are appearances by the luminous trombonist Jack Teagarden, trumpet players Red Nichols and Ziggy Elman, guitarist Les Paul, and the jubilant jazz violinist Joe Venuti. Most of the orchestral accompaniment was conducted by John Scott Trotter, who never got in Bing's way.

The flowing counterpoint between Crosby and Armstrong or Fitzgerald in their duets defines jazz singing; and so do the brief appearances of Bing with the Mills Brothers. In the final number of this bonanza of classic performances — timeless beyond nostalgia — Ella, Louis and Bing celebrate themselves and their musical heritage in "Memphis Blues."

Among the other bountiful joys are Louis and Bing in "Blueberry Hill" and "Lazy Bones"; Bing, Louis and Jack Teagarden in "Gone Fishin'"; and Bing and Ella exulting in the New Orleans tailgating anthem, "That's A-Plenty."

At the core of all these performances is Crosby. Reading a May 2, 2004, column in the Washington Times, I unexpectedly came upon a tribute to Crosby titled "Singer of a Century" that got to the heart of the abiding pleasure of his singing. The writer was economist, historian and controversialist Thomas Sowell, not previously known — by me, anyway — as a music critic: "Part of the greatness of his art [was] that it looked like it wasn't art. He didn't make a fuss about it, but he made history with it. It was a little like the way Joe DiMaggio played centerfield, making it look easy even when it was superb."

I had never met Bing Crosby before the interview in 1976, and I was initially somewhat awed; but he was as natural and unaffected as his singing. He did surprise me at one point. We were talking about performers who took strong, public political positions, a practice that has increased since then.

Crosby frowned. "I never thought it was proper," he said, "for a performer to use his influence to get anyone to vote one way or another."

He was considered to be a conservative, but he had not leapt on anyone's political bandwagon. However, he did tell me that he had been very much against the war in Vietnam. That was the first I'd heard of it, I said.

He frowned again. "I didn't know what to do about it," Crosby said. "So I didn't say anything."

As I was leaving, I asked if there was anything he'd wanted to do that he hadn't yet accomplished. He smiled. "No, I really have accomplished just everything I wanted to. It's been a good life, pleasing people over so many years."

He still does, all the way through "Swingin' With Bing." And though it was so long ago when I first heard him (I was about seven), I can still hear and be moved by "When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day."

Nat Hentoff

(Editor: As you will already have read, within days of that review appearing, the "Swingin' With Bing" set shot to the top of Amazon's hourly jazz charts and reached #6 overall and #2 in Vocal Pop. An incredible performance! Our grateful thanks to Nat Hentoff and of course to Ken Barnes.

Jon Oye echoes our thanks to Ken as he reviews the latest CD set from the Barnes stable which Ken Crossland told us about in our last edition)

Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson

Did you ever wonder what our world, as Crosby fanatics, collectors and connoisseurs might have been like had Bing never met Ken Barnes? For one, he might never have been inspired to record more than a couple of albums in his final years. Even if he had, the quality likely would not have been up to the level of Barnes' production values, and the chances of an orchestra of the caliber of Pete Moore's being booked would have been iffy.

Bing's late 1950s radio recordings with Buddy Cole would no doubt have lain dormant in some warehouse—or worse, been disposed of—never having had elegant new life breathed into them in the late 1970s by Barnes and his colleague Moore. The essential 3-CD set, *Swingin' With Bing* (which, incidentally, as of this writing in early August, sits atop Amazon.com's Jazz sales chart), might have been an unrealized dream of imaginative collectors, with pieces of the puzzle strewn across the inferior *Fun With Bing and Louis*, *My Happiness*, and *Havin' Fun* collections. And chances are we would be without Ken's latest indispensable gift to Crosby Nation, *Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson – the Complete Radio Duets*, from Sepia Records.

If you already own Geoff Milne's excellent 1993 compilation of 40 of Bing and Al's radio performances, *Let Me Sing and I'm Happy,* but haven't yet purchased *Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson*, well...you ain't heard nothin' yet!

As with *Swingin'*, Barnes and restoration wiz Peter J. Reynolds have rescued from oblivion essential Crosby radio performances, this time with that irresistible force of nature Al Jolson, restoring the sound quality to a level that would have been far beyond the reproduction capabilities of the Philco 1201 we hear Bing & Al pitch in this significant compilation. Likewise, the songs, chat,

and a couple of Philco spots (one of which is repeatedly and hilariously "fluffed") from various radio transcription discs from 1946-50 have been edited into a series of seemingly ongoing performances, rather than a snippet here and a snippet there, with abrupt, distracting fades. The resulting two-CD set is another Barnes tour de force, worthy of any serious music collector's library of classic American popular song.

Bing and Al on radio.

There are a staggering 99 tracks, 68 of which are songs or medleys. Every Crosby-Jolson radio duet is featured, plus selected solos, including all of their musical numbers from the classic "minstrel show" of the April 2, 1947 broadcast of Philco Radio Time, with John Charles Thomas (sans Bing's tribute to Bert Williams, "Nobody", available on *Let Me Sing and I'm Happy*). There's also the delightful Gershwin medley from the October 16, 1947 edition of Al's Kraft Music Hall, and a moving, poignant reading of "My Old Kentucky Home", the last song Bing and Al would perform together. Also noteworthy is a riveting duet of "The Best Things in Life Are Free"—at least the third Crosby version of this song with which Barnes has been involved, beginning with their first LP collaboration, 1975's *That's What Life Is All About.*

While this collection isn't the All Star Game *Swingin'* was (Crosby and Jolson were the biggest stars there were at the time, so there's not much room for more anyway), a couple of heavy hitters do make cameo appearances. The primordial 20th century composer and provider of so many Crosby and Jolson hits, Irving Berlin, is on hand for the May 7, 1947 Philco show, and he even performs an endearingly breathless, croaky reprise of his classic, "Oh How I Hate to Get Up In the Morning", which he had immortalized on film a few years earlier in the Michael Curtiz-directed *This Is the Army*. It's the only solo number in the set not sung by Crosby or Jolson. Also on hand for a few songs and witty exchanges is Jolson's KMH sidekick, the appealingly irascible Renaissance man Oscar Levant, who lends some classically ornate ivory tickling to the Gershwin medley.

There's far too much material to cover and do justice to without filling an inordinate number of pages of Bing, so a blanket recommendation will have to suffice. Hopefully this collection will have scaled the heights of the Amazon music charts, like its *Swingin'* predecessor, as you read this. It's certainly worthy.

Many thanks to Ken Barnes, and Richard Tay of Sepia Records, for providing an advance copy of "Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson."

Jon Oye

Two for the Road: Celebrating the Songs of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby

This was the title of Michael Feinstein's concert scheduled for November 16 at Carnegie Hall. Part of Feinstein's "Standard Time" series, the evening was to feature the talents of Jim Caruso, Susan Egan, Zina Goldrich, Marcy Heisler, Rebecca Kilgore and Johnny Rodgers with Chris McGovern and John Sheridan. Two other "Standard Time with Michael Feinstein" concerts are scheduled for Feb. 15 and April 19, 2006.

A four-time Grammy nominee, Michael Feinstein is often credited with reinvigorating the American popular song. The crooner has performed in concert halls around the world and on Broadway and now co-owns his own nightclub, Feinstein's at the Regency. Kathryn Crosby was due to appear there on December 5.

Mrs. Crosby back by popular demand at Fort Hamilton

Fort Hamilton Military Installation is planning another tribute to Bing Crosby on Monday, Nov. 21st at 7pm at the Fort's Post Theater. The evening, which will be introduced by Kathryn Crosby, will help launch the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Bing's record breaking engagement at the New York Paramount in 1931. (This milestone will also be celebrated at the Players Club tribute to Bing which is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 29th.) The Fort, which is one of the oldest established bases on the east coast, is located in Brooklyn, New York. The bill of fare for the evening will consist of a screening of *Bing Crosby: The Christmas Years* which was broadcast in 1978 and hosted by The Crosby family. A compilation by Martin McQuade of military and patriotic songs from Crosby films and TV shows will also be shown.

Celluloid Crosby

British Film Circuit Releases of Crosby Films

If you went to a first run cinema in the UK anytime from the mid-1930s until the late 1980s the main film would usually have the support of a 'B' picture. In every town across the land the programme would be the same because the British film circuits booked and distributed the main feature plus supporting programme as a package. Each circuit played its own newsreel in addition. Pathe, Gaumont British, Movietone or Paramount news would play between the support and main feature. The main circuits were operated by Rank and Associated British Cinemas. The Gaumont circuit was an important third circuit but its identity was lost when it was taken over by Rank and eventually merged with the bigger Odeon circuit. The Paramount circuit consisted of less than a dozen cinemas in major towns and when those cinemas were leased by Rank they too became part of the Odeon circuit. That Paramount link resulted in the vast majority of Bing's film being shown in Odeon and Gaumont picture houses. In addition the Essoldo and Granada circuits had a national exhibition policy but they owned far fewer cinemas and rarely had access to major releases.

The Gaumont chain of cinemas was built up in the late 1920s and by the 1930s their board of directors were seeking sites in major towns to build their super cinemas. J. Arthur Rank formed an early alliance with Gaumont-British in order of facilitate distribution of a religious film he had financed.

The Granada circuit was built up from 1930 to achieve an eventual total of around 60 circuit cinemas.

Next came the Associated British Cinemas chain. By the early 1930s ABC had built or acquired over twenty cinemas. They then went on to open or take over a cinema in almost every significant population centre in the British Isles. By 1937 they were boasting the second largest cinema circuit in the world. They had 510 operating cinemas with a further 180 being built. Only Fox West Coast in the USA had more theatres.

The Odeon circuit came into being in 1933. The founder was Oscar Deutsch. Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation was a valid boast until J. Arthur Rank took over in 1942. Deutsch's health was in decline and Rank wanted to extend his Gaumont interests. At that time there were 258 Odeon cinemas operating.

The outcome of the above meant that the programming of around one thousand cinemas was eventually in the hands of two booking forces: Rank and ABC. As far as Bing Crosby films are concerned the cinemas controlled by Rank brought Bing pictures to most towns in the country. The main reason for that was the link with Paramount which stemmed from Rank's takeover of the Paramount cinema chain during the early days of World War II.

The general release pattern of the circuits was to open a film in the West End and then move it to cinemas in the Greater London area before it went nationwide. This meant that a limited number of prints were struck and then shipped in a predictable distribution pattern to cinemas as releases were rolled out. There were exceptions with some seaside cinemas playing a new film during the summer holiday season before its general release but the standard practice meant that if you lived outside Greater London you would have to wait from four to six weeks from a film receiving a British premiere to its exhibition in a provincial town centre. If you missed it when it first came to town you would be able to see it in a neighbourhood cinema a few weeks later. Neighbourhood cinemas were quite often independent but they still tended to play the same programme package as the town centre super-cinemas. The newsreels were not as up to date and programmes usually changed mid-week - and, of course, the surroundings were not as salubrious. It was only when multiplex cinemas came to the UK in the 1980s than the circuits could no longer expect exclusive rights to new releases as film distribution patterns changed.

Generally speaking, for half a century there was a certain predictability about a night out at the pictures. The feature that played in support of the main attraction rarely ran much longer than an hour and had a distinct 'B' feel to it. It was only when the circuits had doubts about the box-office pull of a film that they coupled a previous box-office hit to play with the big picture. Occasionally a Crosby film was revived to help a weak feature particularly when the circuits were hard pressed for product. There were two periods when the non-availability of new Hollywood releases caused concern. In the late 1940s the British government imposed a high import duty on imported films and Hollywood retaliated by withholding their latest films. Then, with the advent of CinemaScope in 1954, Rank had a disagreement with 20th Century-Fox because they were unwilling to convert all their theatres to widescreen and stereophonic sound. As a result, Fox stopped supplying films for exhibition on the Odeon circuit for several years.

If you saw a Bing Crosby film in Great Britain you were compelled to spend an unmemorable hour and a half in the cinema unless you took a chance and arrived just before the main feature was screened. Otherwise your one and ninepence entitled you to a cheaply

produced programmer, Paramount News ("The Eyes and Ears of the World") and an organ recital before the curtains finally parted to reveal the Paramount mountain and you could settle back to enjoy the film you really wanted to see.

On the following listing of all Bing Crosby films released on a British cinema circuit, the year of release and the cinema circuit are shown first. Where a non-Bing Crosby film was distributed as part of the same programme, that film's title is followed by the names of its main actors in brackets. The country of origin, running time and brief plot description are then shown.

1934 Gaumont. Gallant Lady (Ann Harding, Clive Brook) USA. 86m. Adoption drama. / Going Hollywood. *This first UK circuit release of a Crosby film resulted in it playing as the support feature.*

1935 Gaumont. Mississippi

1936 Gaumont. Anything Goes

1937 ABC. Bullets or Ballots (Edward G. Robinson, Joan Blondell) USA. 81m. Robinson cracks mob racket. / Rhythm on the Range. *The Bing Crosby film debut on the newly formed ABC circuit was in a supporting capacity.*

ABC. Waikiki Wedding

1938 ABC. Lancer Spy (George Sanders, Dolores Del Rio) USA. 84m. Thriller with Sanders disguised as German officer. / Double or Nothing. *The longer Crosby film (91m) played the bottom half of the double bill.*

Gaumont. Doctor Rhythm / Strange Boarders (Tom Walls, Renee Saint-Cyr) UK. 79m. Confusion between spies and newlyweds.

ABC. Sing You Sinners. *Bing's increasing popularity in the UK resulted in a Christmas release.*

1939 Paramount. Paris Honeymoon / Mayerling (Charles Boyer, Danielle Darrieux) French. 89m. Romance between a Crown Prince and a commoner. *The only Crosby film released on the minor Paramount cinema circuit before it was absorbed by Odeon.*

ABC. East Side of Heaven / Hotel Imperial (Ray Milland, Isa Miranda) USA. 67m. Miranda investigates her sister's death.

1940 Odeon. Road to Singapore / The Witness Vanishes (Wendy Barrie, Edmund Lowe) USA. 66m. Crooked journalists try to take over newspaper.

Odeon. If I Had My Way / The Farmer's Daughter (Martha Raye, Charlie Ruggles) USA. 60m. Showbiz down on the farm. *These 1940 releases, the first Crosby films on the Odeon circuit, were distributed within weeks of each other during the summer months.*

1941 Odeon. Rhythm on the River / South of Karanga (Charles Bickford, John Sutton) USA. 59m. Murder on an express train.

Odeon. Love on the Dole (Deborah Kerr, Clifford Evans) UK. 100m. Depression drama from Walter Greenwood novel / We're Not Dressing. *A revival for the 1934 Crosby comedy as a supporting feature.*

ABC. Road to Zanzibar.

1942 Odeon. Birth of the Blues / The Seventh Survivor (Austin Trevor/Linden Travers) UK. 75m. Nazi spy stranded in lighthouse.

Odeon. Holiday Inn / Lady from Lisbon (Francis L. Sullivan, Jane Carr) UK. 75m. Wartime spy comedy.

Odeon. Road to Morocco / The Wrecking Crew (Richard Arlen, Arline Judge) USA. 61m. Demolition worker is thought to bring bad luck.

1943 Odeon. Star Spangled Rhythm / Underground Agent (Bruce Bennett, Leslie Brooks) USA. 68m. Wartime espionage drama.

Odeon. Dixie / He Hired the Boss (Stuart Erwin). USA. 72m. Comedy set in wartime USA.

Odeon. The Silver Fleet (Ralph Richardson, Googie Withers) UK. 87m. Dutchman poses as traitor to destroy German U boat. / East Side of Heaven. *Re-issue of ABC circuit release of 1939.*

Odeon. Undercover [USA title: Underground Guerillas] (John Clements, Godfrey Tearle) UK. 80m. Doctor poses as collaborator in wartime Yugoslavia. / Sing You Sinners. *Re-issue of ABC circuit release of 1938.*

1944 Odeon. Hostages (Luise Rainer, William Bendix) USA. 88m. Wartime drama about Czech underground. / Paris Honeymoon. *Re-issue of Paramount circuit release of 1939.*

This third consecutive release by the Odeon circuit of a Bing Crosby film as a supporting feature showed how a weak main film could be propped up by a Crosby re-issue.

Gaumont. Holiday Inn. *Late summer revival.*

Odeon. Going My Way / Supporting featured varied.

1945 Odeon. Here Come the WAVES / The Battle for New Britain (short)

Odeon. Out of this World / The Brighton Strangler (John Loder, June Dupree) USA. 67m. RKO created London and British seaside resort on Hollywood backlot for drama about actor suffering from amnesia.

Odeon. Duffy's Tavern / Strange Confession [USA title The Imposter] (Jean Gabin, Richard Whorf) USA. 95m. Frenchman escapes prison to help the allies.

Road to Utopia / India Strikes (short)

1946 Gaumont. Pardon My Past (Fred MacMurray, Marguerite Chapman). USA. 88m. Comedy with MacMurray mistaken for playboy. / Going My Way.

Crosby film receiving its second full release within two years for this February double bill.

Odeon. Blue Skies / Her Adventurous Night (Dennis O'Keefe, Helen Walker) USA. 76m. Child invents murder and parents sent to prison.

Gaumont. The Bells of St. Mary's

1947 Odeon. Welcome Stranger / Step by Step (Lawrence Tierney, Anne Jeffreys) USA. 62m. Tierney hunts Nazis in America.

1948 Gaumont. Blue Skies (revival) / Black Memory (Michael Atkinson, Myra O'Connell) UK. 73m. Crime drama with youth clearing father of murder charge.

Granada. If I Had My Way (revival)

Odeon. Road to Rio

1949 Granada. Emperor Waltz / Big Town Scandal [retitled Underworld Scandal for television showings] (Philip Reed, Hilary Brooke) USA. 62m. Newspaper staff clear up baseball racket.

Gaumont. A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court / Dynamite (William Gargan, Virginia Welles) USA. 69m. Eternal triangle drama with Richard Crane and Gargan vying for Welles' affections.

Odeon. Top o' the Morning / The Argyle Secrets (short)

1950 Odeon. Riding High / Dangerous Inheritance [USA title Girl's School] (Joyce Reynolds, Ross Ford) USA. 62m. Reynolds inherits from her gambling father and fears consequences.

Gaumont. Mr. Music / Operation Haylift (Bill Williams, Ann Rutherford) USA. 75m. U.S. airforce assists farmers. *Gaumont timed this Crosby film for Christmas release.*

1951 Odeon. Here Comes the Groom / Never Trust a Gambler (Dane Clark, Cathy O'Donnell) USA. 79m. Ex-wife shelters man on run.

1952 Gaumont. Just for You / Distant Trumpet (Derek Bond, Jean Patterson) UK. 63m. Doctor and missionary swap roles.

Gaumont. Road to Bali / Potter of the Yard (John Laurie, Avis Scott) UK. 30m. Lawman poses as mechanic to catch bank robber. *Gaumont again programmed a Crosby film for Christmas release.*

1953 Gaumont. Little Boy Lost / Anything can Happen (Jose Ferrer, Kim Hunter) USA. 107m. Ferrer plays Russian emigre to USA. *Crosby film main attraction although support had longer running time.*

1954 Odeon. White Christmas / VistaVision Visits Norway (short)

1955 Odeon. The Country Girl / Peace and Plenty (short)

1956 Gaumont. Anything Goes / Innocents in Paris (Alastair Sim, Claire Bloom) UK. 102m. Seven characters have adventures in France. *Support was a revival of popular 1953 release.*

1957 ABC. High Society

Odeon. White Christmas / Conquest of Space or Alaska Seas. *Odeon circuit revived Crosby picture for Christmas because of shortage of new product. Supporting film varied but both were 1955 or 1954 revivals.*

1958 Gaumont. Man on Fire / Bhowani Junction (Stewart Granger, Ava Gardner) USA/UK. 110m. Gardner plays half-caste torn between romance and love of country. *Support was revival of 1956 film because Gaumont had limited faith in box office pull of Crosby film.*

1960 Odeon. Let's Make Love / Hazard (short)

Odeon. High Time / Walk Tall (Willard Parker, Joyce Meadows) USA. 61m. Western about outlaws who kill Indian squaws.

1961 Odeon. Pepe

1962 Odeon. The Road to Hong Kong / Boy Who Caught a Crook (Wanda Hendrix, Roger Mobley) USA. 72m. Bank robber menaces boy. *Spring release.*

Odeon. The Road to Hong Kong / Cast a Long Shadow (Audie Murphy, Terry Moore) USA. 82m. Western. Ex-outlaw Murphy builds a new life. *Autumn release. A second circuit release for the last Road film. Film buffs will no doubt spot that the separate supporting films provide starring roles for once married Murphy and Hendrix.*

1964 ABC. Robin and the 7 Hoods

1966 Odeon. Stagecoach / The Murder Game (Ken Scott, Marla Landi) UK. 75m. Blackmail drama.

1969 Granada. The Forsyte Saga [USA title That Forsyte Woman] (Errol Flynn, Greer Garson) USA. 114m. Galsworthy romance./ High Society. *Crosby film selected to support revival of 1949 film which was released to capitalise on the popularity of the BBC television serial.*

I can't say that researching this article revived memories of anything other than the main Crosby feature. Which says all you need to know about the legend "...and full supporting programme."

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: Many thanks, Keith. Keith has kindly agreed that we can hold over his A-Z section until our next issue in view of the volume of material received for the magazine this time.)

The Lincoln Center Event

We gave advance details of this New York festival of Bing's films in our last issue and it was a delight to see how much publicity it received. Gary Giddins wrote an excellent article for the *New York Sun* of July 20 which we have great pleasure in sharing with you all now.

Going Bing's Way

The Film Society of Lincoln Center is mounting a retrospective of Bing Crosby films – 13 movies and one teleplay – that may astonish those who recall only his road trips with Bob Hope. Crosby is the most conspicuously neglected of the Golden Age Hollywood stars, given his then unexampled popularity. He ranked in the top 10 of box-office attractions for all but five years between 1934 and 1954, and he was the only actor of his time to crown the polls for five consecutive years (from 1944 to 1948). He was nominated for three best-actor Oscars (winning for "Going My Way") and introduced more Oscar-nominated songs than any other performer. All this while sustaining the most successful vocal and radio careers in the 20th century's first half, in addition to building a racetrack and launching the first celebrity pro-am golf tournament.

Yet his persona, on-and off-screen, was that of an incorrigibly lazy man: self-sufficient, unperturbed, shrewd, cool – a grown-up Tom Sawyer, complete with pipe, hat, mismatched clothes, and jivey lingo. Crosby invented a screen character so perfectly gauged that even people who knew him had a hard time separating it from the real Bing, though obviously he was the least lazy man in town. The public perception of Bing – he was always Bing – as an easygoing all-American Joe probably contributed to his posthumous decline in popularity. The casual, laid-back attitude that proved so engaging during decades of Depression and war seemed remote and grandfatherly in the 1950s, when atomic cocktails, rock 'n' roll, and jet travel boiled the national tempo. Bing had grown older while the country grew younger.

Many of the qualities that worked against him posthumously were the same as those that briefly stymied him when he first sought a Hollywood career. He certainly didn't look like a movie star, with his wingy ears, receding hairline, and expanding waistline. Nor did he behave like one when success arrived, refusing publicity, disdaining love scenes, populating his films with musician-friends, and refusing to be billed alone or above the title.

That last directive, which inclined David O. Selznick to pronounce him the smartest man in Hollywood, was entirely pragmatic: If a film succeeded, he'd get the credit; if it failed, he'd share the blame with co-stars. As a result, he helped launch the film careers of several leading ladies (the list includes Carole Lombard, Joan Bennett, Frances Farmer, Kitty Carlisle, Mary Martin, Joan Caulfield, and Rhonda Fleming) and men, notably the young Donald O'Connor. Bing's idol, Louis Armstrong, was the first black artist to receive – at Crosby's insistence – top billing in a white film, though he had only a cameo role.

Bing and Louis in Pennies From Heaven

From the first, Bing proved himself an inventive comedian (he apprenticed in Mack Sennett shorts), using the same impeccable timing that characterized his singing. His ability to ad-lib business or exude tranquil charm made his vocal interludes the pinnacles of his movies, and encouraged Frank Capra to declare Crosby one of the best actors in the business – a remark echoed by actors and directors as varied as Leo McCarey, Miriam Hopkins, Jane Wyman, Raoul Walsh, Robert Mitchum, Blythe Danner, Ray Walston, and George C. Scott. The Lincoln Center selection, curated by Martin McQuade with the participation of Kathryn Crosby (they will each introduce some of the screenings, as will I) leaves out a few of Crosby's best films, but covers much ground and more than 30 years.

A marvelous film could be made about the making of 1933's "Going Hollywood" (July 20 & 22). William Randolph Hearst financed it as a vehicle for Marion Davies, who held up shooting with lavish meals, rivers of wine, and an inability to memorize lines – yet, in the end, director Raoul Walsh and Crosby were banished from the MGM lot for 20 years. Davies is terrific (note the erotic 90-second close-up when she hears Crosby's voice on the radio), but Bing steals this pre-Production Code satire with over-the-top musical numbers, demonstrating his gift for shtick on "Beautiful Girl"; swinging for the bleachers on the brief title song; emoting ("very Russian Art Theater," he called it) "Temptation" while bingeing in a Mexican brothel; and guiding Marion through nauseating giant daisies (they were both high) during "We'll Make Hay While the Sun Shines."

Marion Davies with her co-star in Going Hollywood

"Pennies From Heaven" (1936) and the rarely seen "Sing You Sinners" (1938), both screening July 21, are quintessential Depression films, utopian visions of community that nonetheless mask corruption – the former begins on death row; the latter applauds gambling as an alternative to labor. Crosby is a street-smart troubadour, envying no one and thoroughly independent. The Burke-Johnston score for "Pennies From Heaven" is a classic, but is upstaged by Louis Armstrong's stunning performance of "Skeleton in the Closet," which established his tinsel town credentials. "Sing You Sinners" hasn't been shown in decades. Director Wesley Ruggles conceived it for the purpose of portraying Crosby as the appealing scapegrace his friends knew him to be. Upon reading the script, Bing said, "I guess I can play myself." It's not really a musical, and Bing doesn't get the girl, though he tries to seduce his brother's fiancee. Twelve-year-old Donald O'Connor wins a horse race.

"Anything Goes" (July 22), from 1936, is a fascinating mess. Lewis Milestone was hardly the best director for Cole Porter's early masterpiece, but by the time the censors got through with the song lyrics and the libretto, all any director could do was sit back and pray. Ethel Merman preserves some measure of her Reno Sweeney; Ida Lupino wafts by, looking blond and great; Bing swings Hoagy Carmichael's first movie song, "Moonburn," and the few Porter tunes that made the cut; and if "The Shanghai-de-ho" by Robin and Hollander doesn't drop your jaw, nothing will.

Victor Schertzinger's 1940 "Rhythm on the River" (July 24 & 25) increases its cult standing with each screening. For one thing, the Billy Wilder-Jacques Thery story (as scripted by Dwight Taylor) involves an ingenious deconstruction of pop songwriting. A burned-out tunesmith (Basil Rathbone) hires, unbeknownst to each other, Bing and Mary Martin to write songs with him. Rathbone weds Crosby's music to Martin's words, and writes nothing, but collects royalties and public adoration. Bing is perfectly splendid, especially rendering James Monaco's best melodies and drumming his way through a jazz number that features Wingy Manone and Bing's Rhythm Boys partner Harry Barris. Oscar Levant is a bonus.

Schertzinger also directed 1941's "Road to Zanzibar" (July 24), though to hear observers tell it, he merely called for action and then sat back to see what Crosby and Hope would say and do – they had rival writers feeding them material not in the script. The second of the road movies hasn't got a sentimental bone in its anarchic body, and mandated a stream of outcries from the censors. Production Code chief Joseph I. Breen advised, "There must be no evidence of the slave trader pointing up the breasts of the slave girl when he says, 'Sambo wocky-dockies,' and Hope's reply, 'I'll say she has.' " This is the one in which Bing and Bob find tribal drums in a cavern and send the wrong message; in which Dorothy Lamour pretends to be a slave and the victim of lions; in which notable black actors Noble Johnson, Leigh Whipper, and Ernest Whitman play cannibals.

Leo McCarey's 1944 "Going My Way" (July 24 & 25), once the most lucrative film in the history of Paramount Pictures, is now a neglected masterpiece, dismissed as sentimental and simplistic. It is neither - the tears it elicits are as hard-won as those in, say, Robert Bresson's "Au Hasard Balthazar." James Agee praised its verisimilitude, which may seem incomprehensible now, but McCarey and Crosby set out to re-create their own childhood experiences in Catholic gangs that never committed crimes more threatening than stealing pies or turkeys. The Crosby-Barry Fitzgerald relationship has lost nothing to time, and Bing's performance is astonishing – convincing, engaging, and utterly original. Don't miss the close-up of Rise Stevens when she sees Crosby's white collar. What other actor would have had the nerve to sit at another man's bed and sing him a lullaby? This great film, much of it improvised on the set, is overdue for reconsideration.

The second teaming of Crosby and Fred Astaire, one of the most popular releases of 1946, was the Technicolor extravaganza "Blue Skies" (July 22 & 23), directed by Stuart Heisler and featuring Joan Caulfield, one of those blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked, alabaster blondes who seemed born for saturated color schemes. The film is wall-to wall Irving Berlin (about 20 songs), and the plot one of the strangest in any Hollywood musical, featuring Crosby as an obsessive-compulsive creator of nightclubs who loses interest in them as soon as they open, just as he loses interest in his wife and daughter. The finale is strictly Happy Ending 101, but the body of the film is as dark as the Martin Scorsese film it influenced, "New York, New York."

Billy Wilder made his name with the script for Ernst Lubitsch's "Ninotchka," but his own quartet of films about Americans abroad never quite jelled, perhaps

because he usually made the Americans unsympathetic. He hated "The Emperor Waltz" (July 25 & 26), a huge hit when it was released in 1948, but he was much too hard on it. Beautifully filmed in Canada, the picture is perhaps too fond of its doggy-sex jokes, and Crosby demonstrates little chemistry with Joan Fontaine. Yet his performance perfectly realizes the character of the arrogant, bumbling American (he plays a phonograph salesman in the time of Franz Joseph) who believes he and his country will inherit the world. His first appearance in court is memorable, and if the romance and music are less than riveting, the underlying conceit sustains its own heat.

Bing at the Emperor's palace.

George Seaton directed two of Crosby's key dramatic performances, in "Little Boy Lost" (not in the series) and "The Country Girl" (July 20). Crosby's first wife, an alcoholic, had just died and Bing himself had been known as a binge drinker in his youth, so Seaton hesitated in sending him the script for the latter. But he agreed instantly to play his most daring role. To make the part of Frank Elgin work, an actor must create opposing characters: the irresistible entertainer who radiates goodwill on stage, and the guilt-ridden boozer and liar who makes everyone else's lives miserable. Grace Kelly and William Holden are fine, but like the characters they play, they end up supporting Crosby. A memorable interlude is Bing's barroom duet with bosomy chanteuse Jacqueline Fontaine; his parting shot to her is a choice ad-lib.

"High Tor" (July 24) is a find – a theatrical debut, in fact – originally broadcast in 1956 on the CBS series "Ford Star Jubilee" and little seen thereafter. Directed by James Nielsen and based on Maxwell Anderson's play, to which Arthur Schwartz added mostly undistinguished melodies, it is remembered as the American debut of Julie Andrews – airing just five days before she opened in "My Fair Lady." For fans of high camp, however, it may linger in the memory for an extremely croaky performance by Everett Sloane (you know, Mr. Bernstein in "Citizen Kane"). Shot in 12 days, this Hudson Valley fantasy is a most peculiar time capsule, as sleepy as Rip Van Winkle himself. The print, provided by Kathryn Crosby, is reportedly pristine.

"High Society" (July 20 & 23): Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Grace Kelly, Celeste Holm, Cole Porter songs, arrangements by Nelson Riddle and Conrad Salinger. It's damned near perfect, despite the smug source material ("The Philadelphia Story"), and then some – for example, the trumpet obbligato as Bing sings "Little One."

Blake Edwards's 1960 "High Time" (July 23 & 26), the original old-guy-returns-to-college flick, works overtime at snappy visuals, but still has to make do with Fabian, Richard Beymer, and leading lady Nicole Maurey. Also, Bing in drag. Also, Bing flying through the air in his graduation gown. Tuesday Weld is cute, however, and Bing got to introduce a brand new song, for which Sinatra was undoubtedly very grateful: "The Second Time Around." Maybe it's improved with age.

Finally, Gordon Douglas's "Robin and the Seven Hoods" (July 23 & 25), from 1964, is another pooch, marking the end of the Rat Pack: Indeed, it was because Sinatra quarreled with Peter Lawford that he was obliged to pay Crosby a king's ransom to portray Alan A. Dale. He shows up past the midway point and – guess what? – commits total larceny. Crosby comes across as the only unruffled pro in a sea of over-exerting scene stealers; he sings "Style" in tandem with Sinatra and Dean Martin and all but renders them invisible. Edward G. Robinson parodies himself, Frank sings "My Kind of Town," Sammy Davis Jr. dances a tribute to armaments: a truly bad movie truly worth seeing once.

Once the movie musical went into terminal decline, Crosby was harder to cast. The television detective Columbo was initially offered to him – he wisely declined. He unwisely returned to the priesthood in "Say One for Me," but proved surprisingly effective as two contrary doctors – the philosophical alcoholic in "Stagecoach" (a futile remake, made savory by his performance) and the eponymous serial killer in "Dr. Cook's Garden" (an early made-for-television film).

By then, he preferred to be on the golf course or at the track. Mostly, he preferred to be with his family: his young wife, the former Kathryn Grant, and their three children. He had made a botch of his first family, though his marriage to Dixie Lee, which produced four boys, had been publicly perceived as a template for America's domestic life. Good Catholic that he was – classically educated by the Jesuits at Spokane's Gonzaga University (he dropped out before graduation to sing professionally) – he saw the second family as his second chance, and he grabbed onto it with both hands.

A generation came of age knowing him only for the Crosbys' annual Christmas telecasts and his ubiquitous orange-juice ads. Aside from narrating a section of

MGM's self-celebrating documentary, "That's Entertainment," he disappeared from the screen. He planned a return, however: The script for his eighth jaunt with Hope neared completion at the time of his death, in 1977, at 74.

Gary Giddins

(Editor: Other newspapers had coverage too and we particularly liked the article in The Brooklyn Paper of July 23 as it featured the man behind the event, Martin McQuade.)

'Christmas' In July

by Lisa J. Curtis

GO Brooklyn Editor

Watching the microphone wielding cabaret singer, dressed in a black bow tie and white, double-breasted jacket, at the Triad Theatre in Manhattan Tuesday night was a blast from the past, indeed. Bay Ridge native Martin McQuade sang Bing Crosby songs from the 1930s, '40s and '50s, and even showed off the crooner's merchandise from that time period: a vintage mousetrap and ice cream box.

The theme of his unorthodox set, accompanied by Dave Gross on piano, was celebrating the work of the legendary Crosby. While the overwhelmingly positive songs were from Crosby's numerous films, the household items were examples of the singer-actor's entrepreneurial prowess, helming Crosby Enterprises, which not only made mousetraps and coffee filters, but also emblazoned his name and visage on the packaging a la Paul Newman.

Among the members in the candlelit audience sipping their cocktails and singing along was Crosby's widow, Kathryn, who had traveled from Nevada for this month's cinematic tribute to her husband at the Film Society of Lincoln Center. That retrospective of Crosby's movie career, "What a Swell Party This Is!," continues through July 26 and is co-curated by McQuade.

In addition to performing Crosby's songs and collecting "Crosby-anna," McQuade, 52, is Mrs. Crosby's special events coordinator and her public relations manager when she's in New York, he told GO Brooklyn. The surprising partnership between the owner of the now-defunct Flotsam and Jetsam memorabilia store in Bay Ridge and the former Hollywood actress, who was married to Crosby for 20 years, was sparked by their meeting at Hofstra University in 2002. The school was presenting a symposium in honor of the centennial of Crosby's birth, and it was here that McQuade "gathered his courage" and offered to give Mrs. Crosby a tour of an exhibit he curated about Bing.

Now the duo routinely pair up in Brooklyn for tributes to Crosby's work, whether at the Fort Hamilton Army Base in honor of Crosby's contributions to the U.S.O. or at bookstores where Mrs. Crosby, 72, signs copies of her books, "My Life with Bing," "My First Years with Bing," and "My Last Years with Bing." Their shared mission is keeping Crosby's legacy alive. Like a minister's wife – albeit a svelte, glamorous one decked out in sparkling jewels – Mrs. Crosby patiently and graciously greeted the swarm of Bing's fans and former colleagues that approached her before and after McQuade's concert.

As McQuade is quick to point out, Crosby was a star on the big screen as well as on radio and on television during his career, which spanned 1930 to 1966. According to McQuade, who describes himself as being "bonkers over him," Crosby introduced 14 Oscar-nominated songs and four Oscar-winners and was the first musical star to win a Best Actor Academy Award (for Leo McCarey's 1944 film "Going My Way"). His recording of "White Christmas" remains, after 65 years, the best-selling record of all time, said McQuade, with 50 million copies sold. Despite these awards and accomplishments, McQuade said there has never been a retrospective of his films, and he likened Crosby's disappearance from popular culture to an eclipse.

"[McQuade] has tremendous knowledge about Bing Crosby's career," said the Film Society Of Lincoln Center's Joanna Ney, who collaborated with McQuade on the film series. "He's devoted himself to Bing Crosby. He's a Crosby historian and he, along with Mrs. Kathryn Crosby, brought to light that nothing had been done for Bing, this extraordinary talent."

Mrs. Crosby, who's played opposite Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon in the course of her own movie career, will introduce "High Tor," on July 24 at the Film Society retrospective. Directed by James Nielsen, the 1956 film is considered the first made-for-TV movie. Crosby had intended to release "High Tor," named for a mountain in Connecticut, as a theatrical feature after its broadcast, but thought the set looked too artificial on the big screen, Mrs. Crosby told GO Brooklyn.

"He didn't like the papier mache rocks, but I think it's great fantasy. It's very charming," she said. Based on a play by Maxwell Anderson, "High Tor" is a ghost story with a young Julie Andrews making her screen debut as the phantom (prior to her Broadway stardom in "My Fair Lady"). The movie was only broadcast once on TV, and has never been seen as the Film Society will screen it - uncut and without commercials. It was a real coup when Mrs. Crosby found the archival print on "a shelf in the basement after 50 years," she told GO Brooklyn.

Among the upcoming films in the series, which began on Wednesday, are "High Society" (1956), "Blue Skies" (1946), "Robin and the Seven Hoods" (1964), a new print of "High Time" (1960) and "Going My Way." McQuade, whose father was a film projectionist and ignited his Bing "fascination and obsession" by buying the crooner's albums for him, will be introducing many of the films.

"[Crosby] had a unique personality, and people watching or listening to him felt as though they knew him," said McQuade, explaining Bing's enormous popularity. "He comforted them through the Depression and World War II."

The Bing devotee can go on for hours about Crosby's accomplishments, and it's not likely that his Bing tributes will come to an end anytime soon. In fact, he's planning to perform another musical homage on July 27 at the Greenhouse Cafe in Bay Ridge and says plans are in the works for a Bing retrospective at the Museum of Television and Radio.

"[Crosby's] approach to singing is devoid of artifice. It's very honest and sincere," said McQuade. "Dean Martin said it best when he said, 'A song's best friend is Bing Crosby.' Bing had tremendous talent and technique but it was always in service to the song."

Lisa J. Curtis

(Editor: So how did the film series go? Here's the man himself – Martin McQuade – to give us the details.)

What a Swell Party it Was!

A Chronicle of The Film Society of Lincoln Center Tribute To Bing Crosby

Tuesday, July 26th, 2005 Donned in cap and gown, Harvey Howard is flying, Peter Pan style, high above the class of 1960 in the last scene of *High Time*, which is receiving its second screening today – a day which will see the conclusion of the Film Society of Lincoln Center's landmark retrospective, *What a Swell Party This Is: A Salute to Bing Crosby*. Harvey, emotionally and physically invigorated after four years of collegiate life, has just completed the valedictory address at the commencement exercise in this Blake Edwards-directed frolic. These are also the final moments of what has been an overwhelming time for Crosby devotees and converts alike. For seven days a privileged audience has had the pleasure of beholding Bing in glistening 35mm prints of fourteen of his movies, from the vantage of the luxurious Walter Reade Theater.

As he nimbly lands onto the stage and serenely regards the assembly, an enormous wave of empathy washes over me, having myself just emerged from a deeply enriching learning experience. Yes, all of these films have been seen in revival houses, rarely in 35mm prints, mostly in far-from-perfect 16mm prints, or on TV in either videotape or DVD manifestations. What has been so refreshing is this concentrated exposure to an array of Crosby films in the manner in which they were meant to be seen.

This embarrassment of riches has allowed for a thorough appraisal of how brilliantly the cinegenic Crosby expressed himself. Cognizant from the start that he was to be projected on a grand scale, he calibrated his performances accordingly, understanding, as the iconic movie-stars of the golden era understood, the overriding impact of nuance and economy. This has been majestically demonstrated on this expansive silver screen.

Here, at 70 Lincoln Center, compressed into one *holy week*, has been an unequalled opportunity, enabling one to experience, in microcosm, a taste of the sustained effect that Bing must have had on vast, loyal audiences who would perennially see his magnified presence in darkened cathedrals: audiences bedeviled by the cataclysmic Great Depression, World War Two, and The Cold War; audiences who would return, movie after movie, to savor, en masse, the enveloping comfort, joy, and plain old fun that he provided with such consistency and reliability. Day after day, movie after movie, many have remarked on the infinite appeal of that beaming face, the supple body language, the commanding yet unassuming persona.

Like Harvey Howard, I feel beatified, as though I have just graduated cum laude, not from an academic curriculum, but from a master course in the art of film acting. A glance at my watch reveals that time is dwindling, and as *The End* appears on the Cinemascope screen, my exhilaration dissolves into melancholia. An amplification of my bittersweet state of mind is imagined on the faces and in the tread of my fellow classmates. We reluctantly exit and bid farewell.

Departing from the formidable marble environs of Lincoln Center which have been a second home to me these past weeks, I fixate on the banners touting the tribute, all too aware that they have become obsolete. An engulfing nostalgia for the history of this historic enterprise sweeps over me as my mundane subway trip back home commences.

Preparations and Hurdles

Any major event such as this will consist of many decisions to be made, obstacles to overcome, and inevitable changes of direction. This was certainly the case at Lincoln Center. Once Richard Pena, the Society's program director (and fellow alumnus of the New York University Department of Cinema Studies) heeded my suggestion for the series, we had several meetings with Kathryn Crosby. At one such conference she pledged to provide a never-before-screened 35mm print of *High Tor*. Later on, Joanna Ney, the Society's director public relations, will come on board and work very closely with me in overcoming the problems which the selection process will pose.

For instance, I was determined that the 1936 version of *Anything Goes* should be shown and my persistence eventually paid off. Shortly after agreeing to this seldom seen musical, Ms. Ney informed me that she had located a print from Universal, which owns the pre-1950

Paramount catalog. I asked her, *Is it entitled Tops is the Limit?* She said *Yes.* This response made me a trifle crestfallen, since I was hoping that Universal might have had the version with the original title and not the version which was rechristened when the second version was released. Ms. Ney was tantalized by my suggestion that a 35mm print with the correct name might exist, with, dare it be hoped, the complete *Anything Goes* musical number, sung by Ethel Merman. The remake dictated the obliteration of this song, which for years has only been heard marginally during the opening credits. Ms. Ney sanctioned a search, which took me to The Academy of Motion Picture Sciences, The Museum of Modern Art, George Eastman House, UCLA, and even the Crosby archive in Hillsborough. Resignation set in, but one more possibility came to mind: The Library of Congress.

Pay dirt was struck with a call to the Library's film preservation department. Mr. Michael Mashon, a curator at the Library, reported that he had found a preview print featuring the original title. Although he couldn't verify that the print contained the title song in its entirety, Mr. Mashon offered to strike a preservation copy for the Society.

Such luck was not to be repeated with other print pursuits. None of the aforementioned associations could yield a 35mm print of either *Dixie* or *Little Boy Lost.* There was more disappointment to come. Satisfactory 35mm prints of *Riding High* and *Here Comes The Groom* could not be found at Paramount. Again, a probe was launched, this time widened to the office of Frank Capra, Jr. A glimmer of hope was offered when he told me he would see if his personal collection contained these delightful entries in the desired millimeter. Less than two hours later, he dashed the last hope by saying he didn't have them. He inadvertently compounded the frustration by recalling the high regard his father held for those movies, and the esteem which he bestowed upon Bing.

> *My father especially enjoyed Riding High, his remake of Broadway Bill. Dad thought that Bing was far superior to Warner Baxter.* (Mr. Baxter played the lead role in *Broadway Bill*) *In the first place, for heaven's sake, Warner Baxter had an aversion to horses - a problem Bing surely did not share. In the second place, Dad felt Bing could do no wrong. He would always recall his absolute coordination. He was such a real pleasure to work with.*

But these and other logistical difficulties were surmounted. Eventually the selections were made and the calendar/program was put together, utilizing a sobriquet, overview, and film descriptions derived from my pen. It was decided that the tribute would be launched by a gala reception on opening day. An official press release was issued on June 9, proclaiming that *a great Hollywood legend finally gets his due.* This was followed on Monday, July 11th by press screenings of two films from the series. *High Tor* was one, which the Society was eager to promote in order to maximize attention for the survey. After all, it was to receive its world theatrical premiere on July 24th. The other selection was made on my recommendation. *Sing You Sinners* is a seldom shown Crosby vehicle, never available for home distribution and almost never publicly screened. It is also significant as an early display of Bing's burgeoning dramatic skills. Subsequently, columns devoted to Bing appear in Playbill, The Irish Echo, and The New York Post.

Wednesday, July 13th Some havoc occurs today when Ms. Ney informs me that the preview print of *Anything Goes* has arrived, but that it is only twenty minutes long! It is described as a compilation of the musical numbers assembled by Paramount to promote the film to distributors. Ms. Ney has no choice but to return to square one, acquire *Tops is the Limit* from *Universal,* and return the preview print to the Library of Congress. A cautionary response of *Not so fast* comes from me. After all, the original title and song may lie within. Ms. Ney accepts my point and arranges a private viewing for the very next day, when she will tell me my hopes have not been dashed. Footage has been unearthed which has remained unseen since before the 1956 remake. With this successful archeology, the retrospective is achieving the luster of history in the making. A poster announcing that the glorified trailer will be programmed along with *Tops is the Limit* (a.k.a. *Anything Goes*) triggers a brisk response at the box-office.

Tuesday, July 19th Today begins with Mrs. Crosby's arrival in New York. She is accompanied by me to the downtown studios of *The Leonard Lopate Show*, heard on WNYC-FM, and *The Joey Reynolds Show,* heard on WOR-AM. We have been invited to appear on both programs in order to promote the week to come. Mr. Lopate asks Mrs. Crosby if she has ever been approached before about a Crosby survey. The query elicits this answer.

> *Well yes, in the early years, particularly. But I was a bit in shock after he died, and I couldn't look at anything else. And, of course, if you're going to have a retrospective, Lincoln Center is the place to do it. That covers the world. The other outlying places – they don't really matter as much. But if you are at Lincoln Center, you're there, you're home.*

During Mr. Reynolds show, Mrs. Crosby renders this eloquent appraisal.

> *There are a couple of things, and they are so simple, Joey - to be understood, to have poets who write lyrics that you can sing and want to tell a story with, and have a voice that can make that clear and beautiful at the same time, that's what Bing was about.*

The series itself

Wednesday, July 20th The series commences on a picture-perfect summer day. The audience assembles at The Walter Reade Theater, the lobby of which has been impressively furnished with stills from the chosen films. The inaugural selection is *Going Hollywood,* shown in a glowing print. Ms. Ney welcomes the patrons and introduces me as the co-curator of the retrospective. Before my remarks on the film, there is mention made, as there will be prior to all my introductions, of both the ICC and The Bing Crosby Internet Museum. (Many over the course of the series will evince interest in both).

The next selection, *The Country Girl*, is introduced by Jerome Pickman, who, as head of promotion and sales of Paramount Pictures in the fifties forged a close professional and personal association with Bing. He has a very interesting tale to tell regarding the genesis of the film.

Joan Crawford was a very good friend of mine. Once, after a night out on the town with her, I said, "Joan, You're such a great star - you've won the Academy Award, you've worked at MGM, Warners, RKO, but you have never worked at Paramount. How come?"

"Well, they never asked me. But there is a property at Paramount that I'm interested in - Clifford Odet's play The Country Girl - and maybe you can arrange the female lead for me. I think the actor part would be ideal for your friend, Bing, and the director could be played by William Holden." I had heard of the play but had not seen it.

When I came to work the following morning, I went to see the head of the studio, Y. Frank Freeman, and mentioned Joan's idea. He called the production and legal departments and discovered that the studio had originally acquired the rights of the property from Odets for William Wyler. When Wyler left the studio, Paramount retained the rights. It was assigned to the production team of William Perlberg and George Seaton and was placed on their agenda. The team had just made Little Boy Lost with Bing. Freeman, who was a reactionary, cautioned, "We wouldn't want to make a movie based on a play by that "Red" Clifford Odets." It just so happened that Perlberg and Seaton's offices were right across the alley from Freeman's office. I asked, "Mr. Freeman, Do you mind if I talk to them?" "No, Jerry, Go ahead."

I went to see them and recounted Joan's suggestion. George, who was a gentle, gracious, lovely man, responded, "Great idea!" However, Perlberg, who was a tough, agent type, didn't seem too excited about it. "The idea is good, Jerry, but it just isn't feasible for Bing to play a drunk." I said, "Why don't you let Bing decide that. Do you mind if I call him." They said, "No." I called Bing, and he quickly said, "Yeah, it sounds like a good idea to me. If the boys would like it, I'd be happy to talk to them."

Well, that removed any obstacles. George and Bill signed Bing and also Holden. And then they announced Jennifer Jones. They never called Crawford - never! I think she would have been great - she would have captured the driving, pushy nature of the part. Anyway, the picture is about to start on a Monday and the studio is notified by Jones' agent that she was pregnant. He invoked a force majeure clause in her contract stating that she could break the contract by virtue of an act of God. She was absolved of any liability for not showing up for work.

We had a big problem. There was a lot of money riding on the movie, and we didn't have the female star! Perlberg and Seaton said, "Hey - we just did a picture with Bill Holden and Grace Kelly - The Bridges at Toko-Ri. She'd be great! Let's try to get Kelly." MCA, which represented Kelly and was close to Paramount, said, "It makes sense - let's do it."

They notified MGM, which was her home studio. MGM said, "No. She cannot go to work for Paramount. Next week, we're going to put her in a picture of our own. We will preempt her contractually from making the film." When Kelly heard of the preempt threat, she responded, "If I don't make The Country Girl, I will go back to Philadelphia and never work again." MGM caved. Kelly went to work and made the picture. Although without Crawford there would have been no picture. It probably would be still sitting there!

At 5:30 pm the opening champagne reception is held in the Frieda and Roy L. Furman Gallery at The Walter Reade Theater. This is a swellegant affair. Mrs. Crosby, yours truly, and Mr. Giddins are guests-of-honor at this love fest. The BBC interviews us before and during the affair. A roving photographer from *Variety* weaves through the glamorous crowd. The roster of guests consists of Bing's professional colleagues Bill Harbach, James Sheldon, Jerome Pickman, Phoebe Jacobs, and Donna Marxer, who appeared as a child in *The Star Maker.* Ruth Prigozy, organizer of the Hofstra Conference, Ron Simon, curator for The Museum of TV and Radio, and John Martello, executive director of the Players Club, are present, as is cabaret artist Gregory Moore, fashion doyenne Anne Slater, and Astaire specialist Maureen Solomon. (Maureen will soon be in attendance at Del Mar for the 60th running of the Crosby Breeder's Cup Handicap on July 31st.) The Gonzaga library is represented by Stephanie Plowman and Eileen Bell-Garrison. The ICC's presence is felt by Ernest Sutkowski, Patti Dey, Aldo Silengo, Ron Sarbo, Judy Schmid, Jane Stoutenborough, Sally Monaghan, Carmela Amari, and Pat Kenny.

At 6:30 pm we are all ushered into the theater for a most appropriate entry, *High Society*. From the stage, Richard Pena offers a welcoming statement, warmly thanking Mrs. Crosby for her cooperation, while graciously crediting me as the catalyst for the series. He notes how gratified and proud he is that The Society is hosting this undertaking, and makes a very insightful comment. *With most screen performers, we feel a gap separating us from them. Not so with Bing. Bing always seems to be saying, "Come join me in the fun."*

He summons Mrs. Crosby, who is seated alongside her daughter-in-law, Mihaela, to the stage. Stunning in a black evening suit designed by her couturiere Oleg Cassini, she begins by expressing her gratitude to the Society and states how glad she is that all of our efforts have been so handsomely rewarded. She acknowledges my tenacity and persistence *in getting this dream fulfilled*, commends Mr. Pena and Ms. Ney for their vision in mounting this cavalcade, and conveys felicitations from Dolores Hope. Her words on *High Society* are brief. *Bing was so thrilled to work with Frank and Louis Armstrong. And he was so romantic singing True Love with Grace Kelly. Maybe just a little too romantic! Why don't we just sit back and enjoy*. We all take her advice and thrill to a sparkling VistaVision print of this pastel colored masterpiece. Rapturous applause is abundant. Day one is a runaway smash.

The romantic Bing

Thursday, July 21st This is the day when spectacular prints of *Sing You Sinners* and *Pennies from Heaven* are screened. The former is seen by many for the first time and I don't hear anything but genuine astonishment regarding this neglected Crosby gem. The latter is preceded by a tongue-in-cheek recollection from Edith Fellows, Bing's teenage co-star, which she has permitted me to incorporate into my introduction.

One of my memories about Bing is whenever I had a soda or a candy bar, he'd always come over and say, "What have you got there" I'd say, "A soda, Bing." He could see what I had. We played this game all the time. He managed to ask me if he could have a bite or a sip of soda. I'd always say, "Yes." and he would take my candy bar or soda and just walk away. I lost more candy bars and soda that way. You see, I had a crush on him - who didn't? - and so I let him get away with it. Looking back, he must have thought what a dufuss I was. Hey, Bing - you owe me over 200 sodas and 150 candy bars!! Do you think he heard me? Such a crush I had.

I knew Bing was married and so I didn't want to break up his marriage, not with four sons! So, I suffered in silence. That's hard to do when you're thirteen. He never knew, do you think? A sweet memory. By the way, after the film, he gave me a beautiful dog that I named sarge, which was his nickname for me. I send my heartfelt thanks to the Film Society of Lincoln Center for including this film in it retrospective of my darling Bing.

Best regards, Edith.

Friday, July 22nd The day begins at 11 a.m. at the studios of WBAI-FM, where Mrs. Crosby and I tape an interview for *The Prairie Miller Arts Show*. Mrs. Crosby's dulcet voice quavers affectionately as she rhapsodizes about her husband. *What I've never gotten over is how comfortable he was in front of a movie camera. To sing a song and talk to a girl at the same time and be at ease...Those are several very difficult things to do.*

A mini radio series will be fashioned from the interview, interspersed with Crosby recordings and excerpts from the CD release of Mrs. Crosby's book readings. This will be aired over successive weeks, and will continue in the late fall, to coincide with two Manhattan events which we have been preparing: a tribute to Bing at The Players Club, scheduled for November 29th, and a December 5th appearance of *Kathryn Crosby Remembers Bing* at Feinstein's at the Regency.

A dazzling *Blue Skies* is seen today at Lincoln Center. Also on the agenda are the print preview of *Anything Goes* and *Tops is the Limit*. The afternoon screening of these is attended by singer Margaret Whiting and her husband Jack Wrangler. I became acquainted with Ms. Whiting during the Hofstra Crosby conference, a highlight of which was the concert she performed at the gala. Once *Anything Goes* was selected, I called Ms. Whiting to invite her to attend. This was done since the film features Bing singing a song, *Sailor Beware*, which was composed by her father, Richard Whiting. She immediately agreed to grace the screening as a guest-of-honor, saying how thrilled she would be to see the film - she had never seen it before - especially on her birthday! She also permitted me to introduce her to the audience during my address prior to the films. She is radiant as she takes her bow.

My words include reminiscences by Grace Boyd, who, as Grace Bradley, portrayed Bonnie, Charles Ruggles gun-moll, in *Anything Goes*. Ms. Bradley, who busily keeps alive the flame of her legendary husband, Bill "Hopalong Cassidy" Boyd, spoke with me on the phone a few days earlier, and made this remark.

I had been considered for a role in the play, Anything Goes, so you can imagine my delight when Paramount assigned me a role in the film. Bing and I had worked together on Too Much Harmony so I was very happy to work with him again. I fell in love with his voice. Everyone on the set did. We all adored him. If he had a dark side, I certainly didn't see it.

Martin McQuade with Margaret Whiting and her husband Jack Wrangler (right).

A hush falls over the room as the luminous preview print of *Anything Goes* commences. The Paramount mountain materializes before us, then Ethel Merman sings the familiar first line of the title song *In olden days, A glimpse of stocking was looked on as something shocking, now heaven knows, Anything Goes.* At last, we see those elusive letters of the title loom ahead. A strain of *All through the Night* serves as a never-to be realized tease, and then La Merman reappears, prancing about in a magnificent and glistening art deco set, belting the Porter classic, sanitized to placate the production code.

And though I'm not a great romancer You know that I'm bound to answer when you propose / Anything Goes

When boys who have been christened Clarence are calling their loving parents you so and sos / Anything Goes

When old black Joe can leave Virginia to fight for Abyssinia that just shows / Anything Goes

If women in bars you like / or fast cars you like / if Mae West you like /to be her guest you like / if wearing shorts you like /or reading sports you like / or enamel on your toes.

The incandescent print is the talk of the theater once the screening is over. Ms. Ney declares that she will attempt to persuade Universal to issue the restored *Anything Goes* on DVD. Ms. Whiting, upon departing, remarks, *It was charming. But what ever happened to the Cole Porter score?*

Ethel Merman has fun with Bing.

Saturday, July 23rd Large crowds view today's fare, which includes a matinee of *Robin and the Seven Hoods,* shown in a luscious Cinemascope print, as is the evening's attraction, *High Time*, directed by Blake Edwards, who just yesterday had taken the time to speak with me on the phone. He recollected this amusing epiphany which was shared with the audience.

Early on during filming, Bing was late. Everybody was waiting. I couldn't let Bing get away with this, even though it was early in my career. I had to solve this then and there. After all, money and time were being wasted. After more than an hour had passed, maybe more, Bing showed up. Before I could say a word, Bing said, "Please forgive me. I just got back from the Winter Olympics in Lake Tahoe where I was locked in a closet with four gypsies and a hot guitar." Well, I couldn't help myself! After this, I decided to leave well enough alone.

Sunday, July 24th We revisit *Road to Zanzibar* and *Going My Way,* both in sterling prints. At 5pm, Mrs. Crosby and John Martello join me at Fiorello's to discuss The Players Club event. A New York "hook" is needed for the celebration at the renowned theatrical stronghold. It dawns on me over a heaping plate of lasagna that 2006 will mark the 75th anniversary of Bing's fabled engagement at the Paramount Theater. *Why not herald that?* All are in accord.

High Tor

By the time we arrive at 6:30 at The Walter Reade Theater, a long queue has formed outside for the one and only screening of *High Tor.* Mrs. Crosby remarks to me how gratified she is by the huge turnout. An old friend, Joe Franklin, greets her. We are ushered to our seats by Ms. Ney. Mr. Pena addresses the gathering, stating how proud he is that the Film Society is hosting the world

premiere of *High Tor*. He explains to the crowd that the rarity about to be screened departs from the television broadcast, and reflects the theatrical version envisioned, but never fully realized, by Bing.

Mrs. Crosby is introduced. Her comments are brief. She tells of long drives with Bing before the filming began, during which she would coach him with his lines. She recalls Bing's pleasure working with Ms. Andrews, and recounts her memory of Bing singing at the post production party at composer Arthur Schwartz' house.

As the film begins, I can immediately tell that there is a difference. Of course, there is no mention of *Ford Star Jubilee*, the original venue for *High Tor*, and no car commercial. Rather the credits proceed like they would in any commercial film of the day, with different underlying scoring by Joseph Lilley, whose family is represented in the house by Dan Rigney, the son-in-law of Jane Stoutenborough. A written scroll ensues, not seen in the TV version, outlining the legend of the mountain known as *High Tor*.

On TV, *High Tor* began with a scene in which Bing sings *Living One Day at a Time* to Nancy Olson. This is not the case here. This new "Crosby cut" opens with an introductory vignette of Julie Andrews, Everett Sloane, and their fellow Dutch phantoms, in which Mr. Sloane sings *When You're in Love*. On television, this expositional segment, detailing the ancient curse which drives the drama, does not occur until 20 minutes into the story. The new placement emphasizes the ethereality of the narrative at the outset, avoiding the confusion some found in the original. Now, Bing's reluctance to leave the mountain appears more credible. This substitution enforces the impression, absent in the original, that Bing's character has been compulsively keeping nocturnal trysts in the mist with Ms. Andrews. Now it is evident that what transpires in the course of the drama is not an isolated occurrence, but a repetition which Bing is powerless to end. The change strengthens the romantic and mystical contours of the story, and was presumably made after the initial broadcast, perhaps in light of the negative critical response it received.

This is a fascinating experience, immeasurably intensified by the pristine print. The sets, rather than looking papier mache as Bing feared, seem magical, and every aspect of the mountainous terrain, from its creek and foliage to the steely sky and shadowy crevices achieve a clarity lost on video.

A long ovation follows. Many linger in the lobby, eager to hold onto this enchanting experience. Mr. Pena reveals that many customers have been personally thanking him. He is quite impressed by this outpouring of feeling from the normally reserved clientele. *This never happens to this degree with our other honorees*!

Mrs. Crosby is asked if she would consider distributing *High Tor* on DVD. She promises to take it under advisement. In the lobby, she is interviewed by Kevin Lewis, columnist for Classic Image magazine, who is preparing an article on her movie career. Before repairing to our seats to watch *Rhythm on the River*, she perfectly captures what has unfolded this evening. She confides *High Tor has made it to the big screen. Bing has finally gotten his wish.*

The young Julie Andrews with Bing in High Tor

Monday, July 25th A newly struck print of *The Emperor Waltz* is unveiled. It is breathtaking. Never has the ersatz Tyrol been so vivid. The sensation of joy produced by this is soon tempered by the realization that the ball comes to an end on the morrow.

Tuesday, July 26th I have returned home. Vain attempts are made to wind down from the intoxication of the week just ended. A robust meal at a local eatery with my Karen, a desultory evening stroll, plans for an expanded version of my Crosby concert which will soon take place, nothing can shake this hangover. Perhaps the hair of the dog will do the trick. I pop in a recently acquired DVD of *Holiday Inn*. I've always had a fondness for Christmas in July. My eyes cannot adjust. I rub and stir the sated and spoiled orbs which have feasted for days on larger-than-life Crosby fantasies. The sprawling screen of The Walter Reade Theater suffuses me. For heaven's sake - I'll never be the same. But what a swell party it was!

The Party Continues

The party will continue in miniature form. John Cameron, publicity director of Turner Classic Movies, has informed me that the station has finally heeded my relentless exhortations, and has announced that Bing will be honored as Star of the Month this December. Many classics have been programmed. Most have been broadcast on the station through the years, with the exception of *Pennies from Heaven*, *Here Comes the Groom*, and *The Country Girl*, which will receive their premieres on the station. Mr. Osborne has informed me of his regret that the survey's scope is limited. He explained in a correspondence.

> *I'm only sorry we don't have access to more Paramount films but, as you know, our library mainly consists of MGM & RKO films, also pre-1950 Warner Bros. titles. We do have a temporary license of a few MCA-Universal packages, so it will allow us to include some of the Road pictures as well as Going My Way and The Country Girl, but we don't have the rights to so many of the films which defined B.C. (i.e. We're Not Dressing, Mississippi, Waikiki Wedding, Sing You Sinners, Birth of the Blues, Holiday Inn, Blue Skies, Welcome Stranger, The Emperor Waltz, Mr. Music, etc.). So our tribute can't be as comprehensive as I wish it could.*

Nevertheless, this review is an impressive one, and should go a long way toward awakening interest in Bing. TCM is a bellwether in film appreciation, and this development will surely help create a climate, already flourishing due to Lincoln Center, which will encourage appreciation of Bing's cinematic accomplishments. The choices are the following: *Going Hollywood, Pennies From Heaven, Road to Singapore, Zanzibar, Morocco, Utopia, and Bali, My Favorite Blonde and Brunette, The Princess and the Pirate, Going My Way, The Bells of Saint Mary's, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Here Comes The Groom, The Country Girl, High Society, Man on Fire, and That's Entertainment.* Dennis Millay of the TCM programming department has promised to let me know whether Crosby short subjects will be included. The station has screened *Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove* in the past, and it is hoped that this may be shown in December. Unfortunately TCM cannot accept Mrs. Crosby's kind offer to provide *High Tor* for the tribute but they will consider using it at another time.

Martin McQuade

(Editor: Martin has done a really wonderful job and we thank him sincerely for his efforts. Let's hope that 'High Tor' can reach a wider audience and that the 1936 version of 'Anything Goes' comes out on DVD. The film festival included 'High Society' and 'Robin and the 7 Hoods' and there have been new discoveries about these films recently. Read on!)

Bing's films with Frank Sinatra

In August, there was a fascinating entry on eBay with an asking price of $10,000. Headed "Bing Crosby Signed High Society Documents Frank Sinatra - Rare signed contracts, photos, documents from Crosby", the auction was offered by Gazin Auctions of Los Angeles. The material originated from the Gary Spiegler collection and apparently Mr. Spiegler was active in producing events where he brought various sports stars and entertainment celebrities together for show signings.

In chronological order, the auction included a letter from film producer Sol C. Siegel to Bing dated August 17, 1955. Sol was trying to persuade Bing to take part in a remake of *The Philadelphia Story* which of course became *High Society*. Phillip Crosby had been involved in a motor accident at the time, hence the opening paragraph. The letter reads:

> Dear Bing,
>
> I have delayed sending this note to you for a few days knowing that your mind was occupied elsewhere. I do hope and pray that your boy recovers and regains his health rapidly.
>
> I have today air expressed the print of THE PHILADELPHIA STORY to you at Hayden Lake, Idaho. When you have finished with it I would appreciate your having someone send it back to us via air express, collect, as soon as possible.
>
> After you have run the picture I would suggest one of two procedures - that is, of course, if you are interested. The first is that I could come up to your place for a day and relate to you in a great deal of detail exactly how the music and your new characterisation works. If this should prove inadvisable, the second suggestion would be to wait for two or three weeks at which time John Patrick will have completed a rather detailed treatment that would give you a clear conception of the whole picture.
>
> In my letter to Rosey [Bing's agent, George Rosenberg], which was forwarded to you, I indicated your basic characterisation, and in the event that you have misplaced that letter I am sending you a copy with this one.
>
> There is one defect that will be quite obvious in the picture when you run it, and that is that the Cary Grant character is not in the picture from an equality of footage standpoint with the characters played by Hepburn and Stewart. The version we have in mind would remedy this without undue forcing.
>
> I am sure that you will have a 'feel' of this after running the picture, and I shall await your recommendation of how to proceed.
>
> My very kindest regards.

Bing wrote to George Rosenberg about the proposed film on October 5 from Rising River, Northern California, and clearly he was still having some doubts.

> I can't quite make up my mind about this picture, George—whether or not I want to do it. In the first place I am averse to seeing Sinatra in the part. I don't think he is good for it. He's hot right now, and they have a

tendency to put him in everything, but I am not sure he belongs in this. Maybe I can be convinced by Sol or by the writer or someone close to the picture. Secondly, I don't know if the picture has the heart and the warmth that I am seeking just now in a movie. Then too, this play you know concerns the filthy rich and their problems, and I don't know whether or not people are interested any more in the problems of the rich, in their neuroses, and in their search for recreation and diversion.

I am trying to find a film, George, that has some real honesty, and sincerity to it, and I don't say this just because I was in "Country Girl" and got away with it, or because I am getting hammy or anything, but there is actually not much money to be made in my case from making a movie any more, and unless I can get in something that has some real impact on audiences I just don't want to do it. I think the days of my participation in a big musical with production numbers, etc. are over.

Although this fascinating letter is included in the auction, your Editor saw it in the Gonzaga archives in 1996 and we reproduced much of it in *BING* #114, December 1996. It was included in various items from George Rosenberg's estate which had been acquired by the Bing Crosby Historical Society and then passed to Gonzaga when the Society folded. Presumably there must have been more than one copy of the letter.

However, despite his doubts, Bing decided to participate and soon correspondence was taking place about his remuneration. Finally it was agreed that Bing would receive $200,000 against 5% of the gross which would be paid to him personally at the rate of $20,000 per week commencing on the first day of production. In addition, Bing was to have 25% of the net receipts which would be paid into one of his corporations. The billing agreed was "Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Grace Kelly in "HIGH SOCIETY."

The salaries paid to the other participants were:

Frank Sinatra $200,000

Cole Porter $200,000

Grace Kelly $50,000

John Patrick (story & screenplay) $75,000

Louis Armstrong $75,000

Bing asked for several people to be employed on the picture: Jimmy Cottrell, prop man - Al Calm, stand-in - Leo Lynn, aide-de-camp, who was to receive $200 a week.

Sol Siegel submitted a schedule of dates to George Rosenberg for Bing's involvement.

1955

December 19, 20, 21 - Rehearse and take down for orchestration "Little One" "Samantha" "True Love"

December 22, 23 - Rehearse with Sinatra "Did You Evah"

December 27 - Take down for orchestration "Did You Evah"

December 28 or 29 - Make Cinemascope test.

1956

January 3, 4 - Rehearse with Armstrong "Now You Has Jazz"

January 5 - Record "Did You Evah"

January 6 - Record "Little One" and "Samantha"

January 7 - Record "True Love"

January 16 - Record "Now You Has Jazz"

January 17 - Start picture.

This schedule may have been amended as we have always considered some of the recording dates to be as follows:

January 17 "Well Did You Evah?"

January 19 "Now You Has Jazz"

February 22 "True Love"

The first two dates seem feasible because the pre-recording of the musical numbers usually takes place at the beginning of a film. The February 22 date we have for "True Love" looks strange because filming had almost been completed by then. Was this the date when the scene was filmed or was there a late change of plan to include Grace Kelly in the song instead of just a solo by Bing? Did Grace add her voice to a previously recorded track by Bing? It would be nice to know the answer.

The schedule from Siegel included a Cinemascope test and Mr. Rosenberg commented: "Bing will do a Cinemascope test, but if he doesn't like the results, then he wants to use a wide-screen technique." Bing obviously didn't like Cinemascope because the film was made in VistaVision.

The auction includes various exceptionally detailed documents on the terms of the production which must have made several lawyers very rich at the time.

Jumping ahead to 1963, there is much correspondence about Bing's involvement in *Robin and the Seven Hoods*. Bing started working on the film on October 3, 1963 with Gene Kelly as producer. By October 15, he was becoming a little concerned about certain aspects and he wrote to his agent Bob Coryell (George Rosenberg's partner) as follows:

Talking to Howard Koch last night, and he gave me some rather surprising news. He said it was their intention to shoot a musical number with me, then lay me off three weeks, and do some other things. He indicated that he'd want me to be working, or to be available up into January. This, of course, hardly agrees with our original agreement whereby I was to work four weeks consecutively.

As you know, I've been going over to Warners

almost daily since the 3rd or 4th of October - I can't remember which - and if they plan on holding me in the bullpen or working until January, it would amount to something like twelve weeks. Maybe more.

I think you ought to have a talk with Koch about this, and I'll talk to him about it myself today when I go to rehearsal.

Quite privately, I'm very disturbed about the removal of Gene Kelly as the producer. This was one of the major factors which influenced my desire to make the film. I felt that Kelly would be an outstanding producer of a musical show, and the initial work that he did - the preparation and everything else inclined me to think that he was really going to have a fine musical.

I don't know what will happen now since he's been removed, although the elements are still there. It just depends upon whose hands it falls into. I believe it's going to be Sinatra and Koch.

I mention this because if there's any problem about the time that I'm supposed to be working on the picture, I'd just as soon get out of it - although this is something that I would hold back and not reveal until you have sounded them out and gotten back to me.

Maybe before you talk to anybody, you and I should get together on the phone, or I can come by the office, or you can come by the studio.

Give me a ring.

Bing

Filming continued with Sinatra and Koch as producers and Bing then negotiated an agreement whereby he would receive $100,000 for four weeks work commencing November 18 with any extra time paying him $12,500 a week. Filming was dislocated by the assassination of President Kennedy and the kidnap of Frank Sinatra Jr. and Bing was working on the film until the end of December with several breaks in between. The pre-recording of the vocal numbers "Style" and Mr. Booze" did not take place until December. Bing was involved in other projects with Mr. Sinatra during this period including an Hawaiian album for Reprise, playing in Frank's golf tournament and entertaining at a charity dinner with him.

The documents offered in this auction were very interesting to us but it was not a surprise when they failed to sell for the $10,000 sought.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Whatever happened to C.K. Dexter Haven?

Funny, how we keep coming back to *High Society!* Now Ken Crossland offers a personal view of Bing's work in the 1960s.

When the Greyhound bus deposited Satchmo and his Band at the doors of C.K Dexter Haven's Rhode Island mansion in the opening scene of *High Society*, the figure who jauntily bounced down the staircase to greet them was instantly familiar. Dressed immaculately in blazer and flannels, C.K. Dexter Haven oozed confidence with every step. And, as we were invited to saunter through the comings and goings of Rhode Island's idle rich, it carried on that way. One character dominated every moment of Sol Siegel's film. C.K Dexter Haven was, in Satchmo's words, "Good news".

Dexter Haven was of course a creation of the playwright Philip Barry, but the jazz-loving persona given to him in the 1956 film was courtesy of Bing Crosby Inc. Dexter Haven was Crosby just as much as Bing was C.K. The handsome bon vivant who charmed everyone from his former wife to his former wife's fiancé was the same troubadour who the world had been in love with for at least 25 years. By the time *High Society* came around, Bing Crosby Inc was at the peak of its – or his – power.

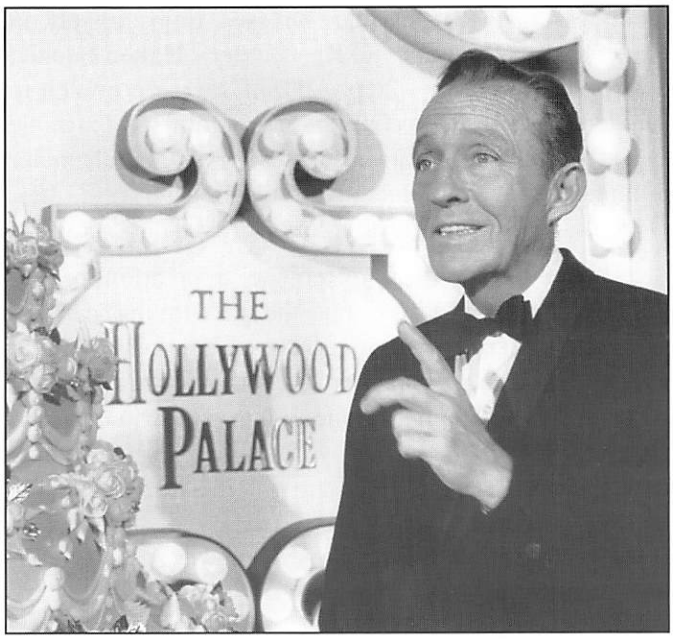
Wherever Bing went, whatever Bing did, he was the main man. It was Bing who called the shots; Bing who the producers favoured and fawned over to sign for their next picture. Crosby was top dog and for all his disarming modesty – doubtless heartfelt and genuine – he knew it. There was no arrogance, no outward displays of power and glory but Bing was too intelligent a man not to understand the power that he held. And with power comes influence, which in turn builds self-confidence and personal esteem.

Few would describe the Fifties as Bing's greatest decade and yet he lorded the entertainment world with a majesty derived from 25 years on its throne. You could see it everywhere. Bing debut on television, described by some as "tentative" was actually full of confidence and assurance. Self-doubt? Wherever he was, whatever he did, poise and assurance that radiated from him.

And it didn't end with *High Society.* In 1959, Bing turned up with Dean Martin as guest on the Frank Sinatra Timex Show. Sinatra's star was rapidly climbing but if you watch the body language between the three, there is no question who was in charge. Bing is in the ring with arguably the two strongest contenders to his crown, but is he fazed? Not a bit. Sinatra's refers to him as "The Champ", whilst Bing's response is to dismiss the two Neapolitans as a couple of "pizza pushers". C.K Dexter Haven was still the man to beat.

But how quickly times change. Fast forward to the mid-Sixties, only five or six years on from the Timex show, and the C.K is nowhere to be found. The man who breathed life and zest into Barry's character is reduced to playing a parody of himself as Bing Collins in an ill-conceived and ill-delivered TV sitcom. Later the same year, the *Hollywood Palace* opened its doors and in true

Fifties fashion, begged and pleaded until Bing agreed to act as it first – and most frequent – MC, a role he sustained for its seven-season life.



The *Hollywood Palace* shows are probably long forgotten in the USA, but for viewers elsewhere, only now do we get the chance to see them in all their glory – or not. Courtesy of Nostalgia Video (see *Keeping Track*), the full hour shows are now available worldwide for the first time. Its almost 40 years since they were screened and sadly, it wasn't worth the wait. The Bing Crosby who turns up is a mere shadow of the Colossus who had sat astride the world of entertainment for as long as anyone could remember.

Physically, he was becoming an old man. The broad shoulders and the straight back had gone, the hairpiece, once immaculate, now looked incongruous and much though he tried to recapture the jauntiness with which Dexter greeted Satch, his gait now had the uncertain shuffle that comes with age. Yes, he still sang and there were moments when the gods rolled back they years, but they were few and far between. The relaxed authority of "Samantha", the unabashed one-upmanship of "Well Did You Evah?" and the sparkle of "Now You Has Jazz" were no more. In the Seventies, things did get better again as Bing approached the final curtain, but Dexter Haven never came back.

So where did he go? Norman Wolfe's excellent biography *Troubadour* offers some answers and demonstrates that despite the dominance that Bing still possessed in the Fifties, he had long since stopped pushing the envelope artistically. And if that was the case, who could blame him? Few people sustain 30-plus years at the top of any profession and still find themselves innovating and breaking new ground.

There were the other distractions too. Some were pleasant – a young wife, a new family, a second chance. Some were more challenging – despite a rugged, outdoor complexion and strong Irish stock, Bing was not blessed with continuous good health. He suffered painfully from kidney stones and there is no doubt that it aged him prematurely.

But perhaps most significant of all was the fact that the world was changing. The Sixties had "new" written all over them. The old order – from race to religion, from dance to drugs – was gone. The music scene had cut the line of descent that stretched back to the Twenties and a singer who cut his teeth with Paul Whiteman must have felt 100 years old alongside the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. If influence spawns self-confidence, anyone who feels he is becoming anachronistic just as surely is a slave to self-doubt.

We now know that Bing was wrong to believe that his time had passed but it was an understandable mistake. Jolson had enjoyed a brief revival in his sixties, but that apart, there were few other precedents for a singer in his sixties. Turn the clock forward 40 years and pop generation of the Sixties – from Engelbert to Cliff Richard, McCartney to Jagger have all found that the fan base is still there as well as the talent. Bing's problem was that he got there first and mis-read the tea leaves. Bing had lots more to offer in the Sixties than selling orange juice and hosting jugglers and it was only for a brief period a decade later that we saw what might have been. We missed you, Dexter.

Ken Crossland

(Editor: A slightly controversial view from Ken and I know that not everyone will agree with him. Watching the Hollywood Palace shows myself, I noticed how Bing's demeanour changed at times. When appearing with newer artists, he lacked some of the old Bing confidence but when he was reunited with the likes of Jimmy Durante, Johnny Mercer and Bob Hope, the C.K. Dexter Haven character reappeared. Other members comments would be appreciated.)

Humanettes

Bob Achorn takes a look at this very rare Crosby item.

The 1931 short subject, "Humanettes," is one of the most obscure of the films attributed to Bing. While prints exist, it is not a movie that gets widespread attention these days.

The Humanettes series was the creation of a director, Leigh Jason, with puppets provided by Bert Levy. From the outset, it was intended as a series. Photoplay magazine announced the first, copyrighted in June, 1930, as Humanettes No. 1. The shorts came out at the rate of one a month until July, 1931. Bing's involvement

was in Humanettes No. 9, copyrighted and released on April 15, 1931.

Edwin M. Bradley's excellent new book, "The First Hollywood Sound Shorts, 1926-1931," portrays the theme of the series: "Novelty revues in which papier-mâché reproductions of performers' heads are placed on Punch and Judy-type figures presumably portrayed by the real actors."

There were no star names. Benny Rubin, a familiar comic of the period, appeared in at least three of the shorts. Interestingly, Humanettes No. 7, entitled "Professor Ginsburg," featured Nat Carr, with whom the Rhythm Boys had played in the Pathé short, "Two Plus Fours," nine months earlier. In that February Humanettes, Carr, a dialect comedian, played a teacher, rather than his usual Ripstitch the Tailor, but the flavor was similar.

In March, 1931, Leigh Jason announced the signing of Gus Arnheim, his orchestra and the Rhythm Boys to appear in No. 9 of the series. Charles Judels, a comic actor of Dutch extraction, was hired to play a sputtering cafe proprietor, a role he often repeated in later films.

It's worth noting that Bing was no longer a mere Rhythm Boy. He was becoming known and applauded for his solo records. In mid-March, 1931, he was only a couple weeks short of recording his breakout song, "Out of Nowhere." Newspaper reports of Jason's March announcement singled out Bing as one of the players to appear in Humanettes No. 9. His partners in the trio - Al Rinker and Harry Barris - were not named. For Bing, fame was just around the comer.

The short subject was filmed immediately after the announcement - probably in late March, for April release. Malcolm Macfarlane, in his massive research on Bing's day-by-day activities, unearthed a Variety review from June, 1931. By then the short was being advertised as starring "Bing Crosby and His Rhythm Boys," no doubt to the displeasure of the creator of the Boys, Paul Whiteman. The Variety review indicated that the faces of Bing, Al and Harry, Judels and Arnheim were all shown, created by Bert Levy as life-sized human heads, placed atop puppet bodies.

The Rhythm Boys were credited with "a couple of harmony numbers," not further described. In that respect, it may be worth noting that the trio made their final recording , and their only trio recording with Arnheim, "Them There Eyes," just four months before they filmed "Humanettes." That could have been one of the "harmony numbers."

Edwin Bradley, in his account of Humanettes No. 9, says this: "At least one prominent Crosby enthusiast who has seen the short in a private collection has verified the depiction of the Rhythm Boys, but cannot be certain of the use of the real performers' voices or visuals."

It seems clear enough all three boys – Harry, Al and Bing – were hired by the director to do the work. The enthusiast's comment may reflect the papier-mâché heads and the often rather primitive recording techniques of the era. Short subjects were slapped together quickly.

Leigh Jason went on to direct 33 more films, including many RKO features. He apparently didn't work again with Bing. Neither, it seems, did Judels, although he appeared in at least 133 Hollywood films up to 1949. He did perform in a couple of early movies with the first Mrs. Crosby, Dixie Lee. As for Gus Arnheim, he was involved over the years in about 35 films as a performer or composer, and he and his band backed Bing on the Crosby radio show for a few months in 1934.

Those early months of 1931 were troubled in many ways, beyond the Great Depression itself. Bing was not always showing up as scheduled. The Rhythm Boys, including Bing, were scheming to break loose from their contract for work at the Cocoanut Grove with Arnheim. Simultaneously, Bing was coming to realize – if not admitting to himself – that the time had arrived for him to break up the trio. He was inevitably going out on his own.

Meanwhile, the RKO studio was struggling with serious economic problems, even as it was preparing to absorb Pathé, essentially bankrupt. Sound films – short or long – were only a couple of years in common use, and far from perfected. In all of this, Humanettes No. 9 was only a passing nine minutes, a sideshow. But it did exist. Presumably, the remarkable Bob DeFlores or some other Crosby film detective will one day provide general prints, and all remaining mysteries will be swept away.

Bob Achorn

The Rythmn Boys at Play

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, NSW, Australia

Thanks belatedly to you and your colleagues for another beaut *BING* (No. 139). It's a credit to all involved and good to see that the bank balance increased during the year. The magazine always has so many interesting articles. Reading of the death of Sister Mary Francis Moore reminded me of those great days at Hofstra University. Gee, that was almost three years ago. I'd love to be able attend the Leeds tribute but that won't be possible, unfortunately. Please give my best wishes to Michael Crampton and I trust that it will be a big success.

At the end of May I was interested and pleasantly surprised to see an advertisement in a Sydney newspaper announcing that the Woodfire Cabaret Restaurant was presenting *Bing Crosby. A jazz portrait* by the Ben Jones Quartet. I wasn't able to go but I've spoken with Ben Jones, a thirty year-old saxophonist-singer about the gig. Jones has played at venues around Australia and at the (world renowned, I'm advised) Ascona New Orleans Jazz Festival in Switzerland in 2001 and 2005. He sings in the Sinatra style but recognises Bing's early jazz influences. Two of the songs he performed in cabaret are 'Small Fry' and 'Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me'. Bing sang the latter with the Firehouse Five Plus Two on his Chesterfield Show.

Did you see the Robert Farnon Society's *Journal Into Melody* No. 164? It includes the transcript of 'Pete Candoli and Uan Rasey in conversation with Forrest Patten, together with Rob Keil'. Candoli and Rasey played trumpet with US bands and were interviewed in USA in September 2004. Rasey's comments included the following about band leader Billy May when he was arranging for John Scott Trotter in 1948:

> Billy really didn't like to rehearse very much. Many times, he'd have an arranger working on a chart almost up to the last minute. He'd say let's go through it once and, if the music was OK, then let's record it. The only difference was when Billy was working on Bing Crosby's show ... On Wednesday we'd rehearse all of Bing's numbers for the show and have the actual dress rehearsal on Thursday morning. Following that, the orchestra would play from charts that Billy had written ... it would only take an hour or less to write Bing's numbers.

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, UK

BING 140 achieved your usual high standard. I was impressed by Wayne Schmidt's formula for calculating box office grosses. It gets as close as ever to an accurate measurement of Bing's cinema popularity.

The highlight of the last issue was Martin McQuade's article about James Sheldon. People with the ability to provide in depth memories of working with Bing are getting fewer with the passing of time. The 1960s was not the best of decades for Bing and for that reason it is not heavily featured in reminiscences. With so many television channels available for hours to fill no doubt someone will reach into the barrel and find these situation comedies worthy of revival.

I never thought that your "Once in a While" piece would raise my spirits. It usually has the opposite effect. However Robert F. Slatzer's obit was the best news since Albert Goldman's typewriter was also silenced.

When I see Ron Bosley at Leeds I will let him know that his photographic contributions to the magazine are superb.

Frans van Der Kolff, Holland

A belated thank-you for the Summer 2005 edition of BING. Again a very interesting issue - standing out (for me) were the interviews with Geoff Milne and James Sheldon. As you, I often came across Geoff's name while purchasing Bing's records through the years. It's nice to know now a little bit more about the man behind the records. The article on Bing's performances for the BBC was most interesting as well. I was amazed to see how little he was paid!

Pete Cakanic, North Augusta, SC, USA

The summer issue cover photo of Bing is archetypal. It's the kind that should have been on the postage stamp. Bing's ears protruded too wide to be able to hold a pencil so he tucked it under his fedora.

I strongly disagree with Mike Kaptanis that "Bing and Russ virtually started their careers about the same time." However, Bing was always Bing and Russ imitated Bing, more than any other singer did. Even to the extent of "buh, buh, buh booing" throughout the recording Russ did of "Paradise." In a chronological sense they began about the same time, but while Bing sang with Gus Arnheim, Russ fiddled. He filled in when Bing's "spirits" took him elsewhere.

This is not meant to knock Russ. I think I have every commercial recording he made. But Russ had no style prior to copying Bing. He did not have much charisma (based on movies of his that I have seen), didn't swing and I doubt he would have gone much further than, say, Tony Martin. Good, popular, but not an icon like Bing.

J. Roger Osterholm, Ormond Beach, Florida, USA

...You and your readers might like to know that for six Saturdays in July and August, 2005, I sang several of Bing's songs at the Moose Lodge, Daytona Beach, and was selected to represent the lodge at a sing-off at another lodge. I sang "Count Your Blessings," "You Are My Sunshine," "Whistle a Happy Tune," "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," "I Could Have Danced All Night," and "It Had to Be You."

And congrats on another great issue of your magazine.

(Editor: Nice to hear from Roger again. Roger has written several articles for BING magazine in the past and published a book on Bing in 1994, which included an innovative chronology which inspired your Editor's books "Bing Crosby - A Diary of a Lifetime" and Bing Crosby - Day by Day".)

Carolyn Schneider, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Many thanks and a standing ovation goes to the team of M & M who provided all of us with a memorable weekend in Leeds.

The 40th. Annual Tribute, meeting and dinner, exceeded my expectations. It was such a pleasure to finally meet some of the dedicated members of International Club Crosby. For me of course, it was a pure joy to be surrounded by the music, film clips, stories and images of my Uncle Bing and to be in the company of so many people who truly admired the man and his career.

Please know that you can count on me to continue my efforts of promoting the memory, music and legacy of our favorite crooner. I myself plan on helping to expand the display at the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko. If any Crosby devotees have thoughts, ideas or things they would like to donate to that museum, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Again, my heartfelt thanks for the warm hospitality extended to me and my husband. It was wonderful to be with all of you and I'll see you next year!

(Editor: It was an honour to have Carolyn as our special guest at the annual UK meeting. Please see the full report on the Leeds event later in this issue for further details.

Now I know that we have had a full report on the Lincoln Centre event already but I enjoyed the following letter so much that I wanted you all to read it too.)

Jane Stoutenborough, Albany, Georgia, USA

I want to share with the ICC readers my complete joy at having attended the Bing-films at Lincoln Center this summer and connecting with other Bing-fans. Although Bing Crosby died on October 14, 1977, he was bigger than life at Lincoln Center for one wonderful week in July. Thanks to the efforts and perseverance of Martin McQuade, his collaboration with Kathryn Crosby and the work of Joanna Ney of the Film Society at Lincoln Center, we were treated to a week of well chosen film gems.

I am an unabashed Bing Crosby fan dating back to my childhood. So when I heard of this special tribute, I rearranged my life around this sacred week. I prepared my husband for my absence, and found a willing friend to spend the week in New York with me.

The advent of our week was the reception on Wednesday, July 20th with Kathryn Crosby as the special guest. Meeting Judy Schmid at the door eased our entrance with introductions to Ron, Carmela, and Sally from the Crosby Board. I had a delightful conversation with Kathryn Crosby while I sipped a glass of champagne and then it was off to watch *High Society.* But before the reception ended, I had the opportunity to meet the 2 1/2 women representing Gonzaga University. Eileen Bell-Garrison, Library Dean and Stephanie Plowman, Curator of the Bing Crosby Collection, along with the beguiling Baby Marie, made the circuit of fans in attendance. They were charming and informative with their insights and their presence contributed an air of academia to the week. Kathryn introduced *High Society* and I was in such good company for this first film. I sat between Judy and Sally, and as if on cue, we shared this audible moan while gazing up at Bing's blue eyes. I thought I was back in high school. And of course, Judy was able to match the opening lines of the movie, so I had my own personal sound system! Every musical number of Bing's was followed by applause from a very appreciative audience. It was such a splendid way to start our "Bing-week."

Each day brought new delights. With my good friend and good sport, Mary, we attended two films each day with the exception of Saturday. Thursday was our first viewing of the 1938 film *Sing you Sinners* with Fred MacMurray and a very young Donald O'Connor. "Small Fry" was the treat of the afternoon film for me. I was able to find something of the real Bing in some of his films. In this one, Bing's interest in horse racing mirrored his real life interest. It was also fun to see a glimpse of Harry Barris as the bandleader. The next film was *Pennies from Heaven* which I think was the first Crosby film I saw as a child. I fell in love with this man and his voice. It was very nostalgic to see the film and thrilling to see it on the big screen. He had such a relaxed easy way with the child star, Edith Fellows. I remember wanting to be her! My favorite song of the film of course is the title song, and I delighted in Louis Armstrong's solo of "Skelton in The Closest." It was pure fun.

On Friday, we attended a viewing of my recent favorite, *Blue Skies.* I am not sure why I am so affected by this film. Maybe it's the triple talents and collaboration of Bing, Fred Astaire and Irving Berlin. Or maybe it's the chemistry between Bing and Joan Caulfield. The underlying flavor of the plot displays self-destructive behavior and a flagrant disregard for others (wife, family) by Johnny (Bing) and Jed (Fred)

had his own issues! I think the character of Johnny in the film reflected Bing's real life pattern of compartmentalizing painful or uncomfortable occurrences in his personal life. I have watched this film over and over again, and it was such a treat to see it in on the big screen. Watching Fred Astaire dance was mesmerizing, and the "Song and Dance" duet with Fred and Bing was a pleasure to watch and to appreciate Bing's labor in this number. I enjoyed the Billy DeWolfe character and his comic timing. And there was the young Joan Caulfield who gazed into Bing's blue eyes with a little too much passion. We completed our Friday films with *Anything Goes*. This 1936 film showcased the comedic talents of Bing. Along with Charles Ruggles and Arthur Treacher, I thought this film displayed a fine tuned comedic story line for its time. Bing's duet with Ethel Merman in "You're the Top" was great to hear. Not many singers could carry this off with Merman's voluminous voice, but Bing's voice was ample and came through crystal clear. This screening included the original title and songs obtained from the Library of Congress, a coup for Martin. I found this film to be a true gem.

Saturday was a New York day for us. We spent the day playing and visiting familiar sites. And this is a good time to mention some additional people we met during this extraordinary week. Pat Kenny introduced us to a wonderful Italian restaurant near Lincoln Center which we enjoyed a few more times during our stay. We also met Patti Dey and she was always ready with her camera. She was patient and so generous to me.

Sunday was just another day of enjoyment which we had come to expect. For the showing of the only "Road" picture scheduled, *Road to Zanzibar*, we were joined by my daughter and son-in-law. Dan turned out to have an interesting connection to Bing. He is a relative of Joseph Lilley, who was the vocal arranger in a number of Bing's movies. The "Road" films have always been fun to watch and "Zanzibar" was just that. It was silliness personified. We completed our evening with the screening of *High Tor*. This was the first made for TV movie with Bing and Julie Andrews. This film was of interest to us because the setting was supposed to have taken place in the county where Mary and I grew up. The tale took place in High Tor and the Trap Rock Quarry. Bing referred to Nanuet and Orangeburg, all towns in Rockland County, NY, not Connecticut as was widely reported. A gentleman in the audience came prepared with his map of Rockland County showing High Tor as well as Low Tor and all the towns in between. It was hard to be objective about this film as I was so wrapped up in its setting. It was nice to have Kathryn introduce it.

We finished up our film festival on Monday with my beloved *Going My Way* and then *The Emperor Waltz*. I won't go into *Going My Way* since I described it as "my beloved". It's a sentimental favorite of my childhood. *The Emperor Waltz* was not new to me. It was fun listening to Bing yodel and his brash New Jersey character was softened by "I Kiss Your Hand, Madame" at which time I softened a little towards this film. But this was my least favorite film of the week.

Each film, with the exception of the two Kathryn introduced, were kicked off by Martin McQuade or Gary Giddins. I was present for the films Martin and Kathryn introduced and Martin gave a history and insight into each film. Kathryn shared her memories of Bing as related to the making of the films she introduced and both set the stage for us to view the film. We had to leave on Tuesday morning and missed the final day, but we had an extraordinary week and it was indeed a "swell party." Thanks to everyone who made this week so special.

Pat Forster, Midhurst, West Sussex, UK

A friend is connected with a retirement home run by nuns for the elderly in Bognor. There is a very full social calendar for the residents, and it was suggested, and eagerly seized upon, that I should give a talk on Bing accompanied by a selection of his records.

I found it had been well advertised about the residence, with hand-made posters depicting Bing, complete with hat, pipe and golf-clubs! I had an audience of just about a dozen. They were all very old and frail and I cut short my talk, only saying I had spent a lifetime collecting his records, and had met and spoken with him several times on his visits to England in the seventies. I played a CD covering the late 30s and early 40s period which I thought they would most like.

At the end, although their reaction was muted, two very old and frail ladies came up to me and both said, one almost with tears, how much they had enjoyed it, that I had given them the most wonderful afternoon, letting them hear again all these wonderful songs.

I left feeling I had done well in giving enjoyment and bringing Bing again into their lives. I also hoped that when my time comes, I shall be spared such an ending, and will do what I call "a Bing"!

(Editor: It's very rewarding to know that there are so many members continuing to spread the word and bringing back happy memories to so many older people. Well done, Pat.)

BING ON THE BOX

Possibly less than half of ICC members have computers or any access to the Internet so some of the items that will feature in this column will be of only passing interest to them. Nevertheless, I'm sure they will appreciate the need for the Club to keep abreast of this ever advancing technology and the benefits it brings by keeping us informed of where and when Bing has been, and can be, both seen and heard. Conventional mail and the telephone will always be the mainstay of friendly communication and one way or another all our news and views is certain to reach those who are quite happy with this more personal approach. So, here are some items which one might otherwise have missed:

For those of us who are computer literate we are advised to have a look at the bulletin board of the Bing Crosby Internet Museum run by Steven Lewis (http://kcmetro.edu/forum/crosby/index.tpl) on which all kinds of news, views, questions and answers are bounced around. For instance, on 28th June, "Toa" from Australia was able to tell us that:

> "2CH in Sydney played an hour of Bing's '30s' movie tunes last Saturday night and apparently played the '40s tunes a few weeks before. Last Saturday night we heard: Learn To Croon - Where The Blue Of The Night - Going Hollywood - Temptation - Please - Thanks - We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines - Love Thy Neighbour - June In January - Love Is Just Around The Corner - It's Easy To Remember - I'm An Old Cowhand - Pennies From Heaven [selection] - Sweet Leilani - In My Merry Oldsmobile."

ICC member Tom Marr spends a lot of time on the Costa Blanca in Spain and has given the local radio station a number of Bing CDs tracks from which presenters Ray Woods and Darren James play tracks on a regular basis, i.e. Monday to Friday and Sunday afternoon! I don't know whether this is available over the Internet but serious wireless buffs may have the equipment to enable them to tune in to Costa Blanca Radio 95.3 Fm to 95.6 Fm or the info. channel on Cable TV for a listen to this outpost of Crosbyana. Currently, the range is from Alicante to Murcia but extending all the time.

Here in Britain Mark Spry noticed a trailer for a UK BBC2 programme [*No Sex Please, We're Teenagers*] on the 6th September. They used Bing's United Artists recording of 'My Resistance Is Low', quite cleverly, breaking up the refrains to emphasize points in the trailer. Bing's diction helped there!

Sky Cinema has the rights to *Road To Rio* and it was screened both in July and October. *Road to Bali* showed up too on the same channel in July. Otherwise little of note on the small screen in the U.K. In a BBC4 documentary on saucy seaside postcard artist Donald McGill, two Crosby numbers were used to point up the action. When a wave of new found morality hit Britain around 1950 McGill was arrested under obscenity laws and temporarily incarcerated pending a trial: cue 'Don't Fence Me In' from Bing and the Andrews Sisters. Later, having been given a very small, token fine McGill capitalised on the publicity by ridiculing the law in his postcard humour to the tune of 'Ac-cent-tchu-ate The Positive'! Then there was the BBC1 Look East news programme covering the story of a local resident who had a small cinema in his back garden – open to the public – among the lobby posters was the most prominent one of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. A senior citizen keeping the vintage films flag flying from little more than a glorified garden shed!

However, Bing on Stateside TV is a very different matter and in recent months we have had:

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court	TCM
Stagecoach	AMC
Scared Stiff	HBO
Let's Make Love	Fox Movie Channel
High Society	Cinemax
The Greatest Show on Earth	HBO
Stagecoach	Fox Movie Channel
That's Entertainment	TCM
High Time	Fox Movie Channel
Flip Wilson: Bing and the Supremes	TVLand
The Greatest Show on Earth	Cinemax
Robin and the 7 Hoods	Cinemax
The Country Girl	TCM
Going My Way	TCM
Road to Morocco	TCM

And, as you are reading this, the bonanza described by Martin McQuade in his article "What a Swell Party It Was" earlier in this issue will be taking place on TCM. UK members, eat your heart out!

THE BIG BROADCAST OF 2005

But UK members do have a lot of radio stations broadcasting Bing. Our old friend Jim Reilly can be heard on Angel Radio several evenings a week. You can now hear his likeable programme on the Internet at www.angelradio.co.uk where listeners will need to download Winamp media player unless, of course, you live in the Havant, Portsmouth area in which case he's right there on the dial of your trusty portable, and where, even as I type this, celebrations of Nelson's great victory and death at Trafalgar are going on. Jim plays lots of Bing and the feedback he gets makes it all very encouraging.

LISTEN UP..... as they say:

Just too late for inclusion in the last issue of BING magazine some cassettes arrived from long-time supporter of this column Maggie Ryan. Oftentimes, the radio presenters choice of music is relevant to events and this also applies to Bing tracks where a connection can be made. But topicality is not a necessary criterion and it is just as pleasurable to hear any of Bing's recordings

wafting over the airwaves whether celebrating a particular anniversary or not. So, yes, Maggie's contribution did cover the period of Bing's birthday, the V.E. Day 60th Anniversary and the onset of summertime but there were many, many tracks being played through those months which were spun for no other reason than simply for the pleasure of hearing Bing. Trevor Fry, BBC Radio Bristol, has his *Late Show* whereon Bing is a regular, often in a double, back-to-back feature; typical examples being 'Lovely Lady' – 'Too Marvellous For Words' and 'C'est Si Bon' – 'For Ever And Ever'. With such a diversity of style by accompanists Victor Young, Jimmy Dorsey, Malcolm Lockyer and the singalong arrangers no wonder Mr. Fry's listeners write in for more of Mr. Crosby. He was also Artiste Of the Week in that west country programme. Following a résumé of Bing's life Trevor featured a track every evening. On one occasion when on a telephone link up with a British Columbia listener said gentleman found it difficult to sit in his chair ["I wanted to get up and dance!"] during the playing of the soundtrack version of 'Wait 'Til The Sun Shines, Nellie'.

Also covering those western counties is David Lowe with his *As Time Goes By* musical farrago of popular music. In requesting 'Moonlight Becomes You' one listener by the name of Wally Hammond [no, not the Wally Hammond! - an England cricket captain of immense sporting stature for those readers beyond these shores and unaffiliated to the Commonwealth] reminded David's audience that when he joined the Royal Navy in 1942 every juke box in Union Street, Plymouth was playing that song. And yet another, lady listener, wrote in asking what was the number that Bing and Anne Shelton duetted at the Stage Door Canteen. She'd seen the show but couldn't recall the song. Sixty-one years must have dimmed her memory slightly as Anne didn't attend the opening gala at 201 Piccadilly previously having sung 'Easter Parade' with Bing just after the BBC's Variety Bandbox show. No matter, David obliged with the track engagingly perpetuated on the BBC album *The Final Chapter*.

Both sides of the 78 rpm starring Bing, Dick Haymes and The Andrews Sisters, featuring the two most well known Irving Berlin songs from *Annie Get Your Gun* were heard though, unlike Frank Wappat of Radio Newcastle who really does spin 78s, David is firmly ensconced in the 21st century by playing all his tracks from CDs. Despite the modern medium, 1920s tracks can also be heard on this nostalgic South & West programme and 'Great Day' and 'Side By Side' are two good examples. One wonders how many recordings from the pop era will be played seventy-five years hence.

Up there somewhere beyond the Southern Pennines both *Frank Wappat's Music Show* and a sort of sister programme *String Of Pearls*, hosted by Christine Prentice, continue to give their listeners just the sort of music to gladden the heart of discerning listeners on Greater Manchester Radio – or GMR as it is known. As mentioned, Frank is a great one for bringing to the studio his pristine 78s, glorifying in the inherent sound quality that, given the right equipment, can still be coaxed from those precious grooves. Bing – ["the King of the Crooners" believes Frank] cut his greatest jazz recording, 'St. Louis Blues', around midnight 11th / 12th February 1932 with Duke Ellington & His Famous Orchestra. I believe it is fair to say that Bing and The Duke shared a mutual admiration which began more or less when Bing, as one of the Rhythm Boys, recorded 'Three Little Words' for the film *Check and Double Check* six months previously. For a white singer his interpretation remains a definitive version of the times. It's probably fair to say that his throaty vocal rendition owes a great deal to the early hours in which it was recorded. The product of a wee small hours, nightclub affected voice!

Bing and Anne Shelton at work

Some sixteen months later the month of June 1933 produced, arguably, a dozen of Bing's finest '30s tracks and among them was 'I've Got To Pass Your House'. "Bing didn't just sing a song, he gave a performance" stated Frank with some considerable authority. 'Happy-Go-Lucky You' and the original 'Temptation' give you some idea of the type of material to be heard on his programme.

Christine Prentice is also no slouch when it comes to Crosby with a regular track by our man on each broadcast. Like a metronome her choice of numbers swings back and forth through the years and while one week we hear 'Happy Feet' seven days later it's 'There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About'. She had some trouble identifying Bing on the January 1928 recording of 'Mississippi Mud' though as this slightly unusual version with Trumbauer sees Bing and Tram engaging in some pseudo black-face vaudevillian dialogue; which would have raised no eyebrows then! Bix is heard to good effect on an extended chorus and Bing's early

association with Eddie Lang on guitar starts here. Throughout the weeks of early summer and beyond Ms Prentice was to feature tracks from the Bing and Peggy Lee CD *Just The Way You Are*. This is a very nice album of radio material worth a place in anyone's Crosby collection.

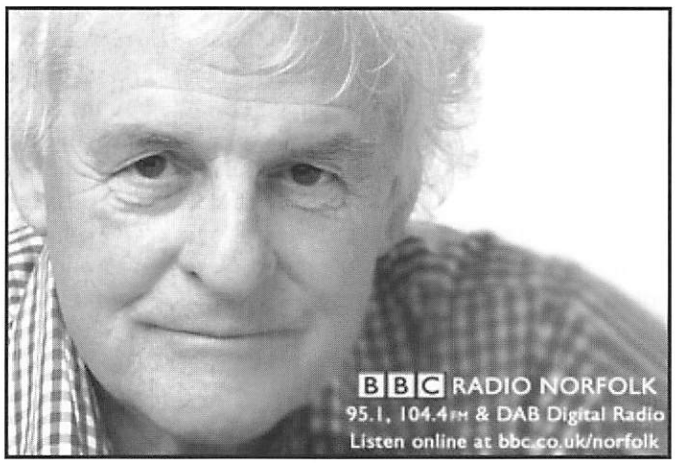
AMAZING AMAZON

Read out over Paul Barnes' Norfolk based programme was an email from our producer friend Ken Barnes giving the news that his 3-CD set *Swingin' With Bing* reached No.1 in the Amazon Jazz Charts in the U.S.A. "What an astonishing achievement!", said Paul on hearing this news. As previously mentioned elsewhere in this issue, it was reviewed in the Wall Street Journal, no less, by their distinguished critic Nat Hentoff who gave it an agreeable write-up. Ken Barnes was very pleased to have a number one seller with this very entertaining compilation and his most recent production *Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson*, on the Sepia label, should do very well too. Writing of which Amazon are again to the fore by their speedy response to a listener who, on a Saturday evening, heard the Bing and Al duet 'The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else' on Paul's programme. Said listener immediately went on and ordered it. His 2-CD set arrived Monday morning!

A couple of playings of 'Down By The River', very much a favourite among ICC members, have been heard around the stations, but played only under sufferance by Barnsey (pictured alongside) who regards this Rodgers & Hart hit song from *Mississippi* as "dismal in the extreme." Being the July calendar number there was a certain 'obligation' from our number one BBC Radio Norfolk presenter but he sugared the pill for any similarly minded listeners with 'Gone Fishin'' which is much more in keeping with the concept of his programme which may be heard Saturday evenings 6 pm 'til 9 pm throughout the eastern region of the U.K. Happily, no problem with the September choice of 'Well, Did You Evah!' to musically illustrate the photograph that adorns the early autumn page. He appears to believe that 'Hello, Mom' one of his favourites, was never well received by members. I've never come across that prejudice myself and, personally, think it a charming number. Barnsey has many Crosby favourites several of which you will hear in any twelve months on his show; apart from the aforementioned listen out for 'Route 66', 'Tomorrow's My Lucky Day', 'Changes', 'Shoo Fly Pie', 'The Lady On The 2 Cent Stamp' and 'Sweet Potato Piper' which prominently features the ocarina "an almost human sound dating from 1853 – invented by an Italian", plus lots of *Swingin' With Bing* again and much from Bing & Al making Paul's Saturday night pot pourri a great alternative to TV.

Howard Leader – absent in Afghanistan early in the year - makes a welcome return to BBC Radio Lincolnshire and while he likes his Crosby duets the most of all – Peggy Lee, the Andrews Sisters, Rosemary Clooney and lately Al Jolson of course – he still plays a soupcon of solos. "Too marvellous for words" was his comment on the Jimmy Dorsey accompanied song of the same name and you don't need to travel if you believe that 'Any Town Is Paris When You're Young'.

Meanwhile, Russell Davies [BBC R2 Sunday afternoons] has been conducting some investigation into popular sounds: apparently it has been found that most hit songs have an 'oo' sound somewhere within the lyric. Considering the amount of 'moon – June' rhyming that has occurred in popular lyrics this is not too surprising. Russell was able to quote 'June In January' and 'Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral', especially, as a good example of Bing getting in on the act. 'Moonlight Becomes You', 'Where The Blue Of The Night', 'But Beautiful' and 'True Love' are all in there pitching for Bing, but I guess Irving Berlin hadn't caught up with market research when he penned his most famous seasonal song!



Our friend Paul Barnes

If you feel, as Russell does, that Bing was lumbered with Sir Cedric Hardwicke and William Bendix then maybe 'Busy Doing Nothing' on record is not for you. But at an important story-line juncture in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* this philosophical, Johnny Burke – Jimmy Van Heusen number simply bubbles over with a joie de vivre on the screen that brings a smile to the face and sets the toes a–tapping. As the best remembered song from the film it outshines the other, quite pleasing, philosophical number, 'If You Stub Your Toe On The Moon', leaving the two rather mediocre ballads as also-rans.

How many of us are aware that 'Home On The Range' is the State song of Kansas? Most of our American members do I expect. Russell played Bing's most appealing, 1933 version with the Lennie Hayton Orchestra on which a certain amount of politically correct wariness prevails which possibly prevented the inclusion of the following verse in this or any of Bing's three waxings:

The Red Man was pressed from this part of the West,
He's likely no more to return,
To the banks of Red River where seldom, if ever,
Their flickering camp fires burn.

Maybe we could get our U.S.A. members to provide us with a list of official State songs some time. It would make for an interesting CD, though I doubt Bing would have recorded enough to provide all the tracks!

Bill and Angela Rennells on their *Harmony Night* have the most remarkable chat-to-tune ratio: often less than ten seconds of introduction to three minutes of music. Bing is very popular with Angela and requests

from our very own Stan of Rothwell and Ian of Northfleet never go unheeded. The rarely heard 'I Love You' originating from the pen of Edvard Grieg was one such and if you are lucky enough to own Fred Reynolds' five volume set of books, *The Crosby Collection*, you can read full details of how Messrs. George Forrest and Robert Wright adapted this tune, and 'Strange Music', for the 1944 operetta *The Song Of Norway*. If you're looking for the so-called 'best of Bing' as the record companies insist on spoon feeding us then Saturday nights at 10 pm on BBC Radio Oxford/Kent is the one to listen to.

Sunday night at 10 pm on BBC Radio 2 always welcomes Malcolm Laycock into the studio with another bagful of big band and dance band records. The appeal of this programme for many is the 'Thirties scene concentrating considerably on British dance bands and their vocalists, though the scope does go beyond that time and tempo. On a recent occasion Malcolm featured British dance band versions of songs made famous, through motion pictures, by Crosby. Very nice to listen to alternative renditions and at the same time be aware of the homage these bands were paying to Bing. However, not to leave out the man himself, Mr. Laycock concluded the recital with Bing covering all the titles with the Oscar Hammerstein – Jerome Kern number 'The Song Is You' to the accompaniment of the Count Basie wannabe Buddy Bregman.

One of the great 'can't live with you – can't live without you' songs was written and composed by George Gershwin and Vernon Duke and disc jockey David Jacobs brought our attention to the fact that it was sung, originally, by Bob Hope to Eve Arden in the Broadway show *Ziegfeld Follies of 1936*. Entitled 'I Can't Get Started' Bing had a couple of stabs at this pseudo-comic lament firstly as a subsequently released radio version enhanced by the Pete Moore Orchestra and two years later as a duet with Rosemary Clooney greatly supported by the conducting skills of Billy May. It was this latter version that David played on his regular programme during which Bing gets quite a lot of air time along with some interesting snippets of associated information. A further example being that the Irving Berlin song, 'Play A Simple Melody', that Bing duetted with number one son actually dates from a 1914 Broadway musical called *Watch Your Step*. David Jacob's Collection at 11 pm on Sunday nights BBC Radio 2 more or less concludes the weekend wireless programmes for listeners who care only for the best in popular music.

Whatever else may crop up 'on the box' regarding the twenty-eighth anniversary of Bing's sad demise I am able to report that Trevor Wagstaff pulled off a minor miracle by having a Bing record played on BBC Radio 2 on an early morning week day programme. Most of us U.K. listeners who won't ever come to terms with post-1960s pop will tell you that much of mainstream, work-a-day wireless is not worth the electricity needed to power our sets but a letter to known Bing fan Sarah Kennedy, now constrained by BBC policy who presents Dawn Patrol, prompted her to play, of her own choosing, 'Straight Down The Middle' as well as an affectionate remembrance of Bing on Friday the 14th October. Thank you Sarah, and thank you Trevor for your tenacity and, in this instance, audacity!

Finally, may I thank our organisers of the 2005 Leeds get-together and say, too, what a pleasure it was to meet up with Bing's niece, Carolyn, and other ICC friends from across the water not forgetting the two, regular stalwarts from Denmark!

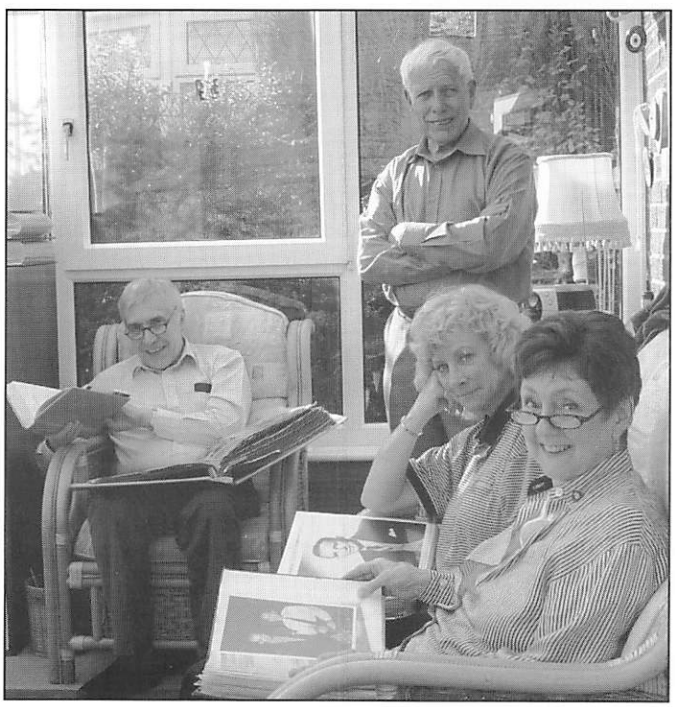
Bert Bishop, October 21, 2005

Leeds 2005

John Walton reports on the 40th annual meeting

After forty consecutive years organising the Leeds Meeting and Dinner, is Michael Crampton getting tired? If he is, it certainly doesn't show. And Arnold Pope, after his own forty-year marathon – is he weary of delivering the Quiz? If he is, the relish with which he poses his devilish mix doesn't give him away. Then there's Malcolm Macfarlane, the hard-working editor of this worthy publication. Couldn't he be forgiven for thinking his involvement was just a 'mile too far'? Not a bit of it! Malcolm's right there at the centre: helping to organise the programme, ferrying much-travelled guests and cheerfully overcoming anticipated DVD projection problems. *(The mole from the Sinatra Music Society is still at large!)*

I was pleased to have been invited to Vera and Ron Bosley's comfortable home in Lancashire on the day before the Leeds event where, after a sumptuous lunch prepared by Vera, six guests settled with Ron's amazing collection of scrapbooks and photo albums. Every aspect of Bing's life and work is covered by the collection. You can imagine how eagerly the guests pounced! Two and a half hours passed like five minutes. Finally, they surfaced, dazed but happy, with no more than initial inroads made but with brains at saturation point plus ten.



Ron (standing) watches John Walton (left) Judy Schmid and Jane Fitzgerald (nearest the camera) examining his albums.

Later, after thanking Vera and Ron for a very enjoyable afternoon, we drove in convoy to Leeds. At dinner that evening there were fifteen Bing enthusiasts who had arrived at Weetwood Hall a day early. Our guests of honour were Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, and her husband, Dirk. The meal was excellent; the conversation animated; the company agreeable.

On Sunday afternoon, the 40th Leeds Meeting and Dinner began with Michael's welcome. He spoke briefly about the origins of the event. In 1965, it had begun with a few friends at Michael's family home and had featured home cooking and Arnold's first quiz. Michael expressed his incredulity that it should now be located, for the second successive year, at the prestigious Weetwood Hall Hotel and still going strong after forty years. He stated that the continuation of the event was in the hands of ICC members but he hoped that the tradition could be sustained at least until the thirtieth anniversary of Bing's death. (2007)

A characteristic of this special event was its international flavour. From Ireland, Dorothy and Derek Perkins attended together with George O'Reilly, the producer of Bing's acclaimed TV show 'A Little Bit Of Irish'. Arriving from Denmark were Ole Meistrop and Gun Damo, the latter attending in spite of recent serious illness. From the USA, in addition to the special guests already mentioned, Jane Fitzgerald, Mary Quinn and Judy Schmid had all made the long journey. In fact it was by way of welcoming the American guests that Malcolm showed an interview with Jane and Mary taken last year when they expressed their intention of travelling to Leeds. Jane and Mary had all but forgotten about the interview and regretted that Sue Horn, also in the video clip, had not been able to make it.

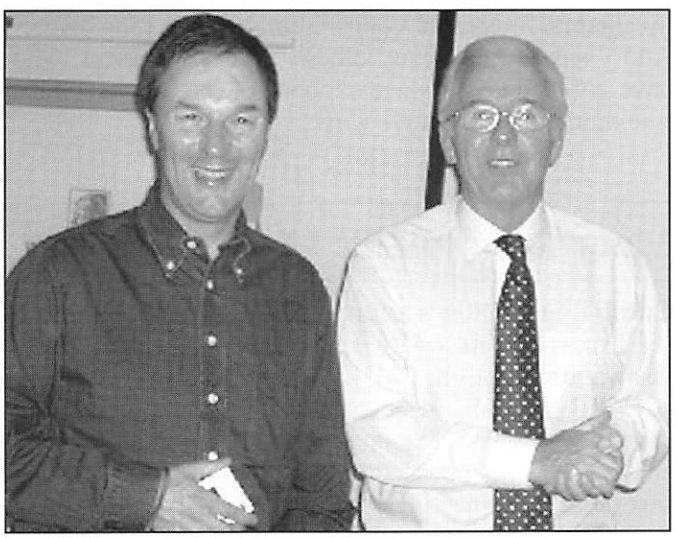
(l to r) Judy, Jane & Mary send their greetings to Sue Horn.

Isn't it easier to convince people of Bing's unique qualities now that his voice during his best years can be heard to such a high technical standard? As the event got into full swing and Malcolm played extracts from recently remastered tracks we were transported all over again as Bing's voice filled the room. Later, Ken Crossland gave an illustrated talk about Bing in the sixties, expressing the view that during this period Bing lost interest and perhaps a little confidence. Nevertheless, there were gems to be found in Bing's presentation of the Hollywood Palace shows, as we saw from Ken's extracts. Even after forty years in the business, Bing's voice could still impress and his style in presenting the shows was characteristically smooth.

Judy Schmid brought with her some fascinating video footage which she had taken while staying with her daughter, Maura, at Bing's Hillsborough house. Kathryn Crosby had given them complete freedom to wander and the resulting pictures gave a fascinating insight, even after so many years, into Bing's domestic life. Bing's 'smoking room' and the patio on which the 'Minute Maid' commercials were shot were of particular interest. Judy referred to the vast number of Crosby artefacts at the house and expressed a wish that these should be preserved for posterity.

George O'Reilly continues to work hard to promote Bing's memory and was currently organising 'An Evening Remembering Bing' on October 30 at the Mahony Hall in Dublin. George spoke of his friendship with Bing and mentioned the warmth Bing always displayed towards his fans. Plans were underway, George said, to release the digitised version of 'A Little Bit Of Irish', possibly before Christmas but more likely in January or February.

When Malcolm, in his 'Bits and Pieces' section, showed Bing's 'Minute Maid' commercials, Ken Crossland wondered if Bing's appearance in them affected his status, perhaps contributing to the current serious undervaluation of his legacy. Bing's posthumous appearance on Nick and Jessica's 'Home For The Holidays' show had a mixed reception, while the anonymous Crosby 'croonalike' in the 1945 film 'State Fair' was declared a pale imitation of the real thing.



Ken Crossland (left) and Editor Malcolm pose for the camera.

When Arnold began his fortieth Quiz, he declared that nobody had ever got ten correct answers out of ten. With Ken Crossland among the guests, however, a maximum was hotly tipped this year. As usual, there were one or two giveaways; nobody would leave with a complete inferiority complex! Other questions were sufficiently taxing; however, to ensure the knowledgeable would be separated from the very knowledgeable. Ken did indeed achieve the highest score, but it was only nine: the maximum remains a pipe dream. And who cares when all those with six or more won prizes?

The guest of honour, Carolyn Schneider, proved a witty and informative speaker. She was astounded that she was the first member of the Crosby family to attend a Leeds meeting and resolved to speak to all her cousins with a view to ensuring greater support in future. Carolyn's comic timing, in evidence in an anecdote she told about Cecil B. de Mille, was reinforced by an amusing extract from her younger days when she appeared in her Uncle Bob Crosby's TV show. In the sketch she appeared as the youngest member of the Crosby family trying to succeed in a record shop selling only Crosby products. An abridged version of her presentation follows this review.

We were treated well by the staff of Weetwood Hall. The buffet dinner was excellent and the facilities of a high calibre. On display in the room were Judy's T-shirts from Gonzaga, a selection from Barry Whittingham's CD library, a cassette collection from the late Colin Pugh and various books about Bing, including Norman Wolfe's 'Troubadour', a limited edition newly published by the ICC.

Where did the time go? Didn't we need to talk more? Meet a few more fellow guests? Listen to a few more tracks? Maybe not. Like all successful shows, this one knew when to end, mindful of the old adage about leaving them wanting more. The 40th Leeds Meeting and Dinner was a fitting tribute to Bing's legacy that its forty-six guests hoped would continue for at least two more years. And, with Bing recently topping the Amazon jazz charts, who knows how much longer?

Congratulations to Michael and Arnold for an invaluable forty-year contribution to the Bing cause. And thanks to the many others, past and present, who have given their sustained support to what has become a true monument to Bing's work.

John Walton

Mary Rose's Little Girl Speaks

Carolyn Schneider's address to the Leeds meeting

I'm sorry I'm so late. I should have been here forty years ago!

I first became aware of a Crosby Club back in the days of Ken Twiss. My mother was on a mailing list for all of the Club newsletters and I know she attended several of your meetings. She would call me after a trip to Tacoma or wherever and tell me what a grand time she had and how wonderful all the members were to her and her husband.

I eventually met Ken at the Club headquarters and he gave me a tour of the facility and their somewhat small display of Bing's memorabilia. Fast forward now to the year 2003 and my visit to Gonzaga. I was absolutely stunned at the huge collection they have there. But I'll talk more on that later.

Members of the International Club Crosby are experts when it comes to Uncle Bing's career, while I am not. Therefore, during my visit with you for this fortieth Annual Tribute, I'd like to share some of my personal information and experiences from a family point of view. As you know, my mother, Mary Rose, was Bing's sister. From time to time I've heard her called Bing's favorite sister and myself as his favorite niece. I am not fond of that title, because in the first place, I don't know that it's true and secondly, Uncle Bing had another sister, as well as other nieces and some nephews, therefore I don't feel that it's fair to them.

My guess is that due to our frequent contact with Uncle Bing, people assumed that Mother and I were favored. I will say, that while we both recognized what a huge celebrity Bing was, our letters and conversations with him were very down to earth and ordinary, like normal family members.

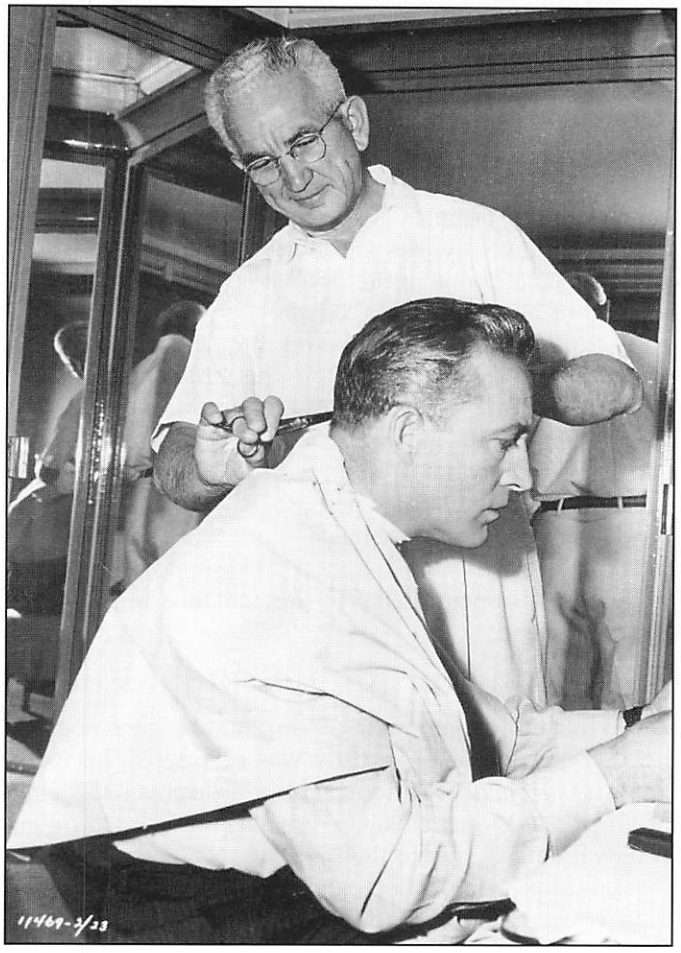
Music was in the air at the Crosby house when Uncle Bing was growing up. I'm sure all of you have heard about the family song fests they had with Kate (Bing's mother and my grandmother) at the piano and his father playing the mandolin or guitar. That enjoyment of music carried on through the years and throughout the family. My mother played the piano by ear and carried a tune pretty well. One of her other brothers, my Uncle Bob, also had a musical career. Bob's daughter Cathy was a singer on her dad's TV show for several years and was declared a promising young starlet by *Life* magazine in the 1950's. Cathy's daughter now appears in clubs and has cut a couple of CDs. Uncle Ted's son Howard likes to sing and does a great job, as evidenced by his performance at Gonzaga University. He also has cut several CDs.

Mother told me that Uncle Bing had perfect pitch - is that true? I know Uncle Bob didn't - he could really hit some clinkers! I think Uncle Bing had the ability to take a pretty poor song and make it tolerable, "Don't Be a Do-Badder" for example.

Being a member of the Crosby family has had many advantages for me. Like Alan Fisher, I too had the opportunity to go places and meet people that I never could have except for my relationship to Uncle Bing. With that thought in mind, I'd like to mention some of my most memorable experiences:

#1 - being employed at Paramount Studios. While I was there I met celebrities and everyday workers as well. William Holden's secretary and I became friends and would have lunch together. Mr. Holden was away filming "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing" at the time. And, I was privileged to watch Victor Young at work on a sound stage and later to the magic he created with his full orchestra. Sometimes I would go to Uncle Bing's dressing room there at Paramount to visit with him when he was working on a picture. He'd be sitting in a barber chair with towels around his neck and tucked in around his collar while the make-up man applied the necessary Max Factor. When he saw me at the door, Uncle Bing

would say: "come in, have you had lunch yet? Can I have Leo get you something?"



Bing as Carolyn might have seen him.

During the time I was on the Paramount lot, the great director Cecil B. de Mille was making "The Ten Commandments". As you can imagine, he ruled the project with an iron hand. When actress Anne Baxter told de Mille that she thought she'd paint her toe nails red, C. B. flew into a rage and told her she was to do no such thing, that in this picture, nail polish hadn't been invented yet. Uncle Bing advised me to go hang around the set and learn something. It was also at this time that John Derek and Ursula Andress started their romance.

More special times were:

#2 - living briefly with Uncle Bing in his beautiful home in Los Angeles. Those days were a blessing for me, a twenty year old girl with an uncle willing to help me start a career in show business.

#3 - The years of attending the Crosby Pro-Am Golf Tournaments also come to mind. Many good memories remain with me from those days.

#4 - The Christmas dinners with Uncle Bing and Kathryn at their home in Hillsborough were genuine family get-togethers.

#5 - A trip to England and the opening night performance of Uncle Bing at the London Palladium, a very big thrill for both mother and me.

All of these wonderful times for me were only made possible through Uncle Bing.

If you ever met my Uncle Bing, you might be surprised at his physical appearance. He was not a tall man; in fact he even wore shoes with lifts in them for some movie scenes. Other than his baldness (a Crosby family trait), the next thing you would notice was his blue eyes. He had a very warm smile and liked to laugh, but most of all, of course, was the voice. As soon as he said even one word, it was unmistakably Bing. Those of us in the family used to get a real kick out of it when he would ring-up and say - "Hello, Carolyn? This is Bing", as if he had to identify himself - that voice - as soon as he said "hello", you knew who it was.

Another Crosby trait was the tendency to gain weight, most of us love sweets and several of us are on the heavy side. Uncle Bing had some years when he looked a bit over weight, which may account for the many Hawaiian shirts that can hide a man's tummy.

Bing never forgot his old friends like Herb Rotchford and would reminisce with his siblings about the "old days" and times at school, etc. (e.g.) "did you hear about what happened to so and so?" or "I just got a letter from —, remember him?" Bing to me; "what's going on with you? Tell me the news." "You sure have your hands full, you remind me of mother with her seven" (I had six children), "Dixie wants to know when you are coming down here again, something about trying on dresses."

Dixie's demeanor could be biting or sarcastic at times because she was a realist, not a phony, (e.g.) "What did you do today to make me proud of you?" she would say to Bing. Dixie and Grandma Kate, two very important women in his life never let Bing get too full of himself.

Money

I found Uncle Bing to be a practical man, especially when it came to money. Although he was accused at times of being stingy or cheap, a tightwad who pinched his pennies, I believe he chose to be careful when it came to spending, buying or investing. Let's not forget his background during his young and formative years, his parents were far from wealthy and the Crosby children were taught to not spend money on foolish things, it was too hard to come by.

As a teenage girl. Grandma Kate gave me the same counsel; "save more than you spend" she would tell me, "and you'll never be penniless." Not bad advice as it turns out, don't you agree?

I can't fault Uncle Bing for being cautious, for trying to maintain a secure financial future for himself and his family. How many times have we heard of celebrities who turn over their paychecks and royalties to business managers who then rob them blind and leave them completely broke?

All I know is, Uncle Bing was very generous to family and friends when he learned of their need. He never turned down mother or me. He would always end a letter or phone call with: "let me know if you need anything" - and he really meant that.

My uncle Larry used to say, "When doing business with Bing, don't ever let him catch you with your hand in his pocket or you'll be out of his good graces and you'll never get back in."

Bing never bought mother a car or house, contrary to some reports, however, his relationship with her was

warm, close, natural. They frequently communicated by phone and letter. She always knew where he was and what his plans were and visa versa. She also handled several of his real estate transactions over the years.

Elko

A letter in the last issue of BING magazine from Carmela Amari (New York Librarian who wants us to donate CD's, DVD's, videos to libraries) brings up the subject of promoting Uncle Bing's image and music. This is exactly the reason I'm here today and the reason I wrote my book.

The International Club Crosby can use all the exposure it can get. Here in the UK, you probably have not heard about any other Bing Crosby displays or collections of memorabilia except that at Gonzaga University. However, I came across the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko, Nevada, where Uncle Bing owned and operated several ranches in the area from 1943 to 1958. When I visited there, I found a small but professionally done exhibit of items relating to Uncle Bing. One of the outstanding pieces was Uncle Bing's denim tuxedo.

Bing and Elko Mayor Dave Dotta in their denim tuxedos.

I spoke to the museum registrar and director, asking if they would like to add more to the collection and expand the exhibit. They jumped at the chance. I had offered my keepsakes to Gonzaga University but they didn't want anything of mine. No wonder! It seems that they still have rooms full of items that haven't even been cataloged as yet. So that's how I became a benefactor to the museum in Elko. As a result, they have moved the display into their theatre area and expanded it to about 30 feet. They play music from Bing's CD's that I gave them to enhance the viewing experience, during regular museum hours.

Another reason the museum is so accommodating is because Uncle Bing held the premier of "Here Comes the Groom" there in Elko, in July of 1951 as a fund raiser for their hospital building fund. It netted $10,000 - a lot of money in those days. Uncle Bing was well liked by the cattle ranchers and townspeople of northern Nevada. They told stories about what a good neighbor he was. Through interviews with some of these folks which were done back in 1983, they talk about Bing as being "just as ordinary as you please, as plain as your butcher or anybody. He was always singin' or whistlin' and would help out in the cook-house too. We all just thought of him as a singin' cowboy."

On the occasion of receiving the denim tuxedo, he said his "thanks" and then sang this little song: (to the tune of 'On top of Old Smokey):

"A-way up in Elko,
They know what to wear,
The next time I come here,
I'll have to bring my hair"

He then tipped his hat to the audience to show his very bald head.

Crosby name

While doing research of our family genealogy, I learned that the name Crosby was of English ancestry and was originally spelled Crosbie. I discovered a coat of arms listed for the clan, as well as one for Harrigan, Bing's mother's side of the family.

It is interesting to note what has become the value of the Crosby name over the years. Due to Uncle Bing's fabulous world wide success in the show business, the Crosby name brings instant recognition. Then again, when you say **Bing,** it rings a few bells also.

Quite frankly, I fail to understand why some people and places can use the name "Bing" or "Crosby", to their advantage, yet never give him any credit. Why don't they promote his image or career or music if they are going to use his name? Obviously they think it has some monetary value or they would choose something else. I'm referring to real estate properties for example, they use the name and then say something like: "we think Bing would like this" - when they never even met him! (Case in point, the Pebble Beach House).

Another one is: "we think Bing would approve" - how the heck do they know? Some members of our family have been able to get a job, have respect of co-workers, get a bank loan or the best table in a restaurant - because their name was Crosby. This is not to say that it's a bad thing, however, it seems one of my cousins who posed nude in a U.S. Magazine, got the job because her name was Crosby. I wonder if the editor would have been quite so interested in using her if her name had been Smith or Jones. Without a doubt, this one time they can't say "we think Bing would approve", or "we think Bing would like this."

Authenticity

At times I read something or hear rumors about Uncle Bing or some other family member that is not correct. Everything from the wrong name under a photograph to some outright lie, it's very annoying.

Usually it's an honest mistake, but I wanted to bring up the subject of authenticity and misinformation. For club members, I'm sure it's very important that you have correct information and authentic collectables.

I know that a number of books have been written about the life of Uncle Bing, his humble beginning, his rise to fame, the vast number of recordings he made, etc. In many areas of his career he had no equal - he was a star in radio, film, TV and the record industry - The Entertainer of the Millennium!

I find it especially sad therefore, that some authors thought it necessary to write about Uncle Bing's personal life in a scandalous way, even Gary, his own son. While I realize that business is business and authors need to sell their work, I think that the use of exaggeration, innuendo, hearsay, rumors, third party endorsements and such is not fair and at times down right dishonest and all for the sake of making money. I feel strongly that to speculate on what took place in a person's life or to take what the tabloids print as the gospel truth is a mistake. And when it comes to Bing's collectables, I urge the Club members to not be hoodwinked by those people who only want to make a sale. I believe it is vital that you receive correct information and genuine articles.

Carolyn and Uncle Bing

End

The International Club Crosby is to be congratulated for the many years and the many devoted members who keep in touch, get together in an atmosphere of camaraderie to remember and perpetuate the memory, music and life of Bing Crosby.

As the years go by, I am well aware that Uncle Bing's image is fading and we are losing more members than we are gaining. However, I too want the memory to stay alive and membership to grow. If the Sinatra's can do it, so can we! Therefore, I'd like to propose that we use some of our resources to help keep things going. I'm referring to the rest of my cousins, their spouses and children. I haven't mentioned this to any of the Club officers, but if they are willing, I would be glad to provide the names and addresses of my ten first cousins, all nieces and nephews of Bing. Let's see if we can get them interested in International Club Crosby. My husband and I are willing to pay their dues for one year to get them started and hope that they will become active members, involved in the Club and its magazine. I think they all would have stories to tell.

I will write a cover letter to them and ask that the Club do the same.

In closing, may I say what a great pleasure it has been for us to be here. This is a very special event and we thank you so very much for inviting us.

Carolyn Schneider

(Editor: It was wonderful to have Carolyn and Dirk with us and Carolyn has now provided the names and addresses of her first cousins to Wig. We look forward to their further support and involvement.

Carolyn is in the process of having a book published called "Me and Uncle Bing" and for further details see our "Books 'N Bing" section.)

Nick Perito 1924-2005

An Appreciation by Greg Van Beek

The man who made Christmases merry and bright for Bing Crosby on television in the 1970's has died. Nick Perito, who was to Perry Como what John Scott Trotter was to Bing Crosby, passed away at age 81 on August 3rd. He succumbed to pulmonary fibrosis at the Motion Picture Country Home and Hospital in Los Angeles only two months after contracting the lung disease for which there is no cure.

Nick, an Emmy-nominated Hollywood composer and arranger, began working as Perry Como's music director in late 1963, when longtime Como conductor Mitchell Ayres moved from New York to Los Angeles to conduct the orchestra for the weekly ABC-tv variety series The Hollywood Palace. He remained as Perry's conductor and arranger for television, recordings and concerts from then on, right through Como's final performances in 1994.

The list of luminaries with whom Nick made music reads like a who's who of show biz greats. Performers such as Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Andy Williams, Bob and Dolores Hope, Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, Dorothy Dandridge, Shirley Bassey, Diana Ross and many, many others. In fact, he was the "king of Christmas television", having served as music director for the Perry Como, Andy Williams, and Bing Crosby Christmas specials....all three at once in 1972! He also conducted for the Kennedy Center Honors for many years, garnering many nods for his efforts from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Later, Nick took over from Les Brown as Bob Hope's music director in the early 1990's.

Nick's work with Bing Crosby began in 1956, when he accompanied him on the Ed Sullivan TV show,

playing accordion for "True Love". In 1969, following the tragic death of Mitchell Ayres in an auto accident, Nick took over to conduct the orchestra for the final season of The Hollywood Palace TV series. He conducted three palaces in total for Bing, including the 1969-70 season opener, and the series finale. Also in 1969, Nick served as an arranger under John Scott Trotter for Bing's TV special starring Carol Burnett and Roy Clark, "Together Again For The First Time".

It was for NBC's "Bing Crosby and The Sounds of Christmas" in 1971 that Bing asked Nick for a new, fresh arrangement on White Christmas, telling Nick "you write all of that jingle bells stuff for Como, I'm sure you'll write something real pretty for me too". Despite utilizing different music directors for his annual yuletide specials, Bing insisted that they use Nick's arrangement of his most famous song from then on.

In 1972, Nick was music director for two of Bing's NBC-tv specials; "Bing Crosby and His Friends" in February, and "A Christmas With The Bing Crosby's" in December. The last time Nick worked with Bing was March 3, 1977, when he conducted the orchestra for his Pasadena, California concert, which was taped for CBS-tv and aired March 20th as "BING -A 50th Anniversary Gala."

It was this 50th anniversary TV special that first introduced me to Nick Perito. In 1995, I corresponded a bit with Perry Como's secretary (Como had the same secretary for over 40 years, so she had a LOT of great stories to share!). I mentioned to her that I had a copy of the show, and she, in turn, told Nick, who promptly phoned me inquiring if I could send him a copy. It was the start of a ten-year friendship.

Nick Perito as we shall remember him.

On a personal note, Nick's passing was like losing a member of my family. In the subsequent years, we became very close friends. We always understood and respected one another, and were always "on the same page." He valued my opinion and I his. Many times he'd phone me on a Saturday night, and we'd solve all of the world's problems over the phone! He liked me because he knew I had a genuine interest in the music and performers of the past, something that never ceased to amaze him based on my relatively young age. He also knew I didn't have a hidden agenda. In his time, he'd met a lot of "fans" whose sole interest in him was to get close to their idols. Such was not the case with me.

He felt comfortable enough to speak candidly with me, knowing it would go no further. While his family was doing all it could to protect his image, Nick kept me abreast of the rapid decline of Bob Hope's health during his final years. Because of this, I was somewhat prepared for Bob's passing, as it was imminent for a week before it actually occurred. I've always been a huge Bob Hope fan, as was Nick. Once, when they were together at Capitol Records, Nick called me and put Dolores Hope on the phone for me! I was stunned.....what a surprise! He also had Bob and Dolores sign a beautiful 8 x 10 photo for me, which I treasure.

One of the highlights of my life was the three days I spent with Nick at the Hofstra University Bing Crosby conference in November 2002. I was so happy when he agreed to be a part of it at my urging. Nick and I rehearsed for our interview panel the day before...I had a script prepared for both of us, and, I imagine just like he did with Perry on all of those Como TV shows, we sat together at a table and went over the script... a "read through". Nick got out his red pencil, just like old times, and crossed out some things, added some others. I was a total novice at it all, and he was a consummate professional all the way.

Nick got a rousing ovation for his arrangement of "White Christmas" from Bing's 1971 Christmas special, which we screened. I was so proud to be up there with him...when I turned and applauded him along with the rest of the audience, he raised his hand, gestured toward me, and led the audience in applauding ME! I certainly didn't deserve it, but it just goes to show what a wonderful man he was. Totally devoid of ego, and more than happy to share the spotlight.

Nick and I both taped interviews at Hofstra for the Spokane Public Television documentary *Bing- Going My Way,* which was in production at the time. He enjoyed the outcome a great deal, but was a bit disappointed that less than 2 minutes of his 90 minute taped interview was utilized for the show. I was a bit disappointed too, as I arranged the interview for him. My interview was cut altogether. But we both were happy to be a part of it.

As a result of this experience, it was difficult convincing Nick to tape another interview for the *Christmas At The Hollywood Palace* special that aired last year on PBS. But thankfully, he warmed to the idea and became very enthusiastic about it, even convincing his dear friend Ray Charles to be a part of it at my suggestion. Nick was so pleased to be "working" again with Perry Como and Bing. He had been a bit depressed, as he wasn't working as much as he was used to, or would like to have been. I was so happy to have been

able to get this "job" for him. He took a great interest in all aspects of the project. He wasn't asked to, but offered to provide the underscoring and opening/end credit music, which was totally improvised by Nick on a synthesizer keyboard. I think it's fitting that after all of the wonderful music and memories he shared with those two legendary singers on television, his final work on the small screen, as fate would have it, turned out to be once again with both of them.

For the last three years of his life, Nick was working on his autobiography. It was finally published last fall under the title "I Just Happened To Be There", by Xlibris. I think the greatest tribute to Nick's memory, and one that would certainly please him the most, would be to purchase a copy of this autobiography if you haven't already done so. In it he shares some wonderful memories of working with Bing, Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and many others.

My friend David Hendrickson taped a radio interview with Nick on April 23 to promote the book on our weekly "Weekend With Perry" radio show that we co-produce. Two days later he embarked on a trip to Washington D.C. to conduct for the Educator Awards Banquet of the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference, followed by a two week recreational visit to New York. When I talked to him in mid May upon his return home, he was battling a stubborn cold and cough that wasn't subsiding. Other than that, he seemed in good spirits. After not hearing from him for about a month, I received an e-mail that said he had been hospitalized since June 3rd with a sudden attack of respiratory inflammation. It took another week or so until I was able to track down the hospital where he was being treated and find his room number.

On July 5th, I spoke to Nick for what turned out to be the final time. I had a strange feeling that I'd never speak to him again. I knew it was not a good sign for an 81 year old to spend over a month confined to a hospital bed. He seemed his old self, and, despite an occasional coughing spell, was in a jovial mood. He was SO excited when I told him I found a Perry Como Christmas special he had been searching for. "OH MY GOD. THAT'S THE ONE I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR"!! He cried in the phone when I described it. I told him I'd send the show to his wife and that it would be waiting for him when he gets home. There was silence on the other end of the line. I think he knew that he wasn't going to be coming home again. I broke the silence by asking how long he thought he'd be in the hospital yet. He said "oh I'm going to be in here a long, long time yet. They're talking about moving me to a rehabilitation center closer to my home in a week or so." We talked for about 15 minutes. Both of us were dreading saying goodbye. When we finally did, I was reduced to tears.

I'm grateful for the ten years I was able to know this wonderfully talented man. Grateful for the many kindnesses he'd shown toward me during that time. But most of all, I'm grateful to have been able to be counted amongst his friends. He left us still in his prime, with full knowledge that his services were still in demand, having had to cancel concert dates with Regis Philbin and a performance accompanying our Honorary President at Bing Crosby's Restaurant July 18 due to his hospitalization. Without question, his musical genius will be sorely missed.

Greg Van Beek

ONCE IN A WHILE

Other personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Frances Langford died on July 11 at the age of 91. Born in Citrus County in April 1914 and raised in Lakeland, Langford was discovered by bandleader Rudy Vallee when he was in Florida for a performance, and he invited her to be a guest on his radio programme. After a brief stint in the Broadway musical "Here Goes the Bride" in 1931, she moved to Hollywood, where she had a 4-year stint on Louella Parsons' radio show "Hollywood Hotel" and began to appear in movies. She joined Decca as a recording artist and enjoyed a few minor hits in the late 1930s with 'Harbour Lights' being the most successful. Jack Kapp soon had her singing with Bing on the Pennies From Heaven 12" medley discs and she teamed up with Bing again on December 9, 1938 when they recorded 'Gypsy Love Song' and 'I'm Falling In Love With Someone' together. She also guested on Bing's Kraft Music Hall show on March 9, 1939.

She made her debut on Bob Hope's "Pepsodent Show" when he performed at a military camp for the first time at March Field on May 6 1941. The response was so positive he continued broadcasting from training bases and asked Langford to join him. She became a regular on his show from September 1941 until June 1946. Soon there were enough soldiers overseas to bring his variety show to them and she was part of Hope's troupe which boosted wartime morale at military bases and hospitals in Great Britain, Italy, North Africa and the South Pacific. She later entertained new generations of soldiers in Korea and Vietnam. Her trademark was "I'm in the Mood for Love," written for her for the 1935 movie *Every Night at Eight.*

She and Bing performed together frequently during the war years at fund-raising events, on Armed Forces Radio Service shows and when Bing guested on Hope's radio show. Frances also went on the Hollywood Victory Caravan in 1942 with Bing and many other stars. She appeared in 30 Hollywood movies, including *Broadway Melody, Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *The Hit Parade.* She played herself in her final film, 1954's *The Glenn Miller Story.* When she left the Bob Hope radio show, she became known for her role as the insufferable wife, Blanche, opposite Don Ameche on the popular 1940s radio comedy "The Bickersons." Langford wrote a daily newspaper column, "Purple Heart Diary," about her war experiences and later starred in a movie of the same name which was released in 1951.

Her first marriage was to actor Jon Hall, who appeared in films such as *The Hurricane* and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.* After World War II, she was singing in nightclubs when she met outboard motor heir Ralph Evinrude. They married in 1955 and moved to her 400-acre estate in Jensen Beach, 100 miles north of

Miami. The couple built a Polynesian-themed restaurant and marina on the Indian River called the Outrigger Resort. She entertained locals and celebrities, including Bob Hope, until Evinrude died in 1986 and she sold the property. In 1994, she married Harold Stuart, assistant secretary of the Air Force under Harry Truman. She is survived by her husband. She had no children.

Bing and Frances broadcast on an Armed Forces Radio show.

Her last professionl interaction with Bing was on the Hollywood Palace Show of May 13, 1967 when she and Don Ameche re-enacted a sketch about "The Bickersons."

Hildegarde, the cabaret sensation whose elegant piano and vocal style — combined with flirty banter and a champagne smile — made her an icon of nightclub sophistication for decades, died on July 29 at the age of 99. From vaudeville obscurity, Hildegarde became one of the highest-paid performers of the 1940s. Specializing in such wistful songs as Jerome Kern's "The Last Time I Saw Paris" and Noel Coward's "I'll See You Again," her recording career, high-profile musical engagements and onstage charm brought her such nicknames as "The Incomparable Hildegarde" and the "First Lady of the Supper Clubs." Her signature song, "Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup" was a minor hit in 1943 and her most successful recording was "The Gypsy" which reached No. 7 in the charts in 1946. Hildegarde's warm voice was especially good at such wartime favorites as "I'll Be Seeing You" and the English-language version of "Lili Marlene." In the 1940s she starred on the NBC Radio programme "Raleigh Room," sponsored by the cigarette company and the show reached No. 12 in the ratings for the 1944/45 season. Surprisingly, it appears she never worked with Bing but their paths crossed on May 17, 1947 when they played together in the National Celebrities Golf Tournament at the Columbia Golf and Country Club, Washington, D.C.

GORD ATKINSON'S THE CROSBY YEARS

Rosemary Clooney - This For Remembrance

Gord Atkinson looks at another major player in the Crosby story

Rosemary Clooney was an incomparable song stylist, a singer's singer and a classicist of popular music. Her matchless phrasing, her crystal clear diction and effortless style set a standard of excellence. Sadly, these ingredients of good taste in vocalizing have become a lost art in the cacophony of contemporary music. Bing, shortly before his death, praised her as "the best singer in the business!"

The last of the celebrated "girl singers" of the Big Band years left us a legacy of quintessential recordings. Her death, June 29, 2002, from lung cancer, was deeply felt by her loving family and countless friends. She was 74. Her natural, captivating manner, warm sense of humour and good nature are greatly missed by those of us who were privileged to be numbered among her friends. She was buried in Maysville, Kentucky, where she was born May 23, 1928. Her home town always held a special place in her heart.

Her career began with her late sister, Betty, as a popular singing duo with Tony Pastor's Orchestra. When Betty married and left show business, Rosemary pursued her solo career.

In 1980 she and her journalist brother, Nick, launched an annual fund raiser for the brain injured. Betty died from a brain aneurysm four years earlier.

In the 1950s, under the tutelage of Mitch Miller, who was the artists and repertoire director of Columbia Records, a string of Clooney hits were produced. They ran the musical gamut from the novelty that made her a recording star, *Come-on-a My House*, to her beautifully performed ballads, *Hey There, Mixed Emotions* and *Tenderly*.

"I love *Tenderly*, but it's a difficult song to sing", she once told me. "I wasn't relaxed with it. Mitch was a great director. He told me that I was letting the song intimidate me. 'You are not singing it,' he said, 'It's singing you. You have just got to pretend that it has never been recorded before.' And that was the way I approached it and we got it on the next take."

In February, 2002, for her remarkable body of work, Rosemary received a lifetime achievement award at the annual Grammy Awards. A month earlier she had undergone lung surgery to remove the upper lobe of one of her lungs.

Her fascinating autobiography, *This for Remembrance*, took its title from a line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Married to the late internationally acclaimed actor, Jose Ferrer, and the mother of five children, her personal life was shattered by the breakup of their marriage. The extraordinary demands of her career caused further stress to her state of mind, which resulted in a terrifying mental breakdown. With self determination, proper medical treatment, and the help of concerned and understanding relatives and friends, she made a complete recovery - followed by an inspiring show business comeback.

Bing and Rosemary at their Brighton concert, October 1977.

In one of our interviews she remembered fondly the support she received from her colleagues – two in particular: "When I was hospitalized Bob Hope sent me a huge bouquet of flowers with a note that said, 'I hope it's a boy!' About a week later a letter came from Bing Crosby, who was in England and heard about my illness. In his words of encouragement he said, 'If there is anything you need I'm here for you!' – And that's the way he was. We were a perfect musical match. I was more comfortable with him than anyone else."

My association with Rosemary dates back to the 1970s when I was producing my radio series, *The Crosby Years*. Bing played (as all Crosby fans know) a major role in her career on radio and TV and co-starred with her and Danny Kaye in their perennial film, *White Christmas*. It was during his 50th anniversary tours of North America and Britain in 1976 that Rosemary resumed her career. Bing was largely responsible for her return to show business. He also wrote the foreword to her autobiography. With his encouragement, she recorded an impressive collection of albums for the Concord jazz label. Her final collection, *Sentimental Journey*, was released for the millennium.

Rosemary Clooney with Elaine and Gord Atkinson at Canada's National Arts Centre, Ottawa, Sept. 1984.

"We were all in awe of Bing," Rosemary told me with admiration and affection. "By the time I arrived in Hollywood, he was a legendary figure, yet he never was comfortable with that image. Danny Kaye was an enormously talented man, but Danny felt the same way about Bing as I did. I remember once talking to Frank Sinatra about Bing and he said, 'How can you be so comfortable with him, you seem quite at ease in his company.' And I assured him that I was just pretending to be relaxed. Bing, of course, was the person who least wanted that kind of adulation. He really was a modest man. It's hard to say that about a star of his magnitude but it is true.

"There was never a moment in my lifetime, from the time I was a little child in Maysville, that I was not aware of him. My father was a tremendous Crosby fan.

"There would be a moment when I was singing with him that I would see an angle of his pipe or just the edge of an expression on his face that I had seen a million times before, and I would say to myself, 'you're in the wrong place girl, you shouldn't be here singing with him, are you crazy?' However, I never expressed my feelings because he felt uncomfortable with that kind of

reverence — and that was indeed what I had for him.

"He was wonderful with fans. When I appeared with him at the London Palladium he would meet them at the stage door and sign autographs late into the evening."

Towards the end of her life, Rosemary was acclaimed for her sensitive acting skills on the TV medical drama, *ER*, portraying a once-famous singer suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Her guest role was suggested by her nephew, George Clooney, her brother's son, who was one of the stars of the hit series.

Every Christmas for several years Rosemary recorded an appropriate Yuletide ballad for her friends as a thoughtful remembrance. Each cassette included a personal greeting. My wife and I have ten of these treasured tapes, including one with her daughter-in-law, Debbie Boone. One year she missed sending a Christmas cassette and in the spring recorded *Easter Parade* for her friends with an amusing explanation, that at her time of life she could do whatever she wanted.

Her children, Miguel, Maria, Gabriel, Monsita and Rafael and their families were always her first priority. She doted on her ten grandchildren. When Gabriel married Pat Boone's daughter, Debbie, two famous musical families were united. In 1996 Rosemary married a long time close friend, former dancer, Dante DiPaolo. Her last years were among her happiest.

During one of our lengthy interviews, she reflected on her latter day acclaim: "I think somehow, having a longer view and more experience helps, and the fact that there is a kind of joy to my work now. It was missing in the past, diverted at times with stressful things that were going on in my life. Now I feel that music is the most important thing in my life, and it gives me great joy."

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: This excerpt from Gord Atkinson's autobiography is published courtesy of Creative Bound Inc.)

Keeping Track

***Ken Crossland** looks at the new releases.*

COMPACT DISCS

The challenge at this time of year for the Crosby music reviewer is to sort the perennial wheat from the Christmas chaff! Its wonderful of course to hear Bing so much to the fore at Christmas time, but I do confess to a tinge of regret that Bing's Christmas recordings seem to overshadow his true legacy to the music business.

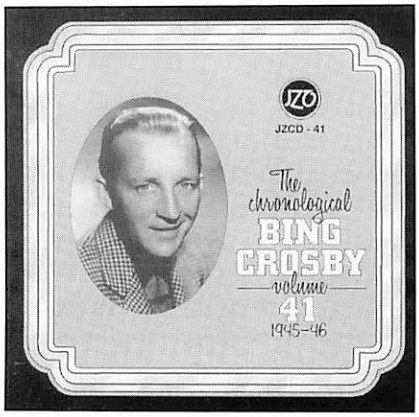
But there we are. Lots to savor this time around, mostly with tinsel but let's start at least in the non-Christmas camp and the welcome appearance of two more Jonzo Chronologicals. Volumes 40 & 41 are now available, taking the complete Crosby recordings now available on CD to January 1946. Details are as follows:

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 40 Jonzo JZCD-40 UK £10.60

1-4. The Happy Prince 5. Give Me The Simple Life (A) 6. Give Me The Simple Life (B) 7. It's The Talk Of The Town 8. I've Found A New Baby 9. Who's Sorry Now? 10. Sweet Lorraine 11. A Door Will Open 12. In The Land Of Beginning Again 13. Aren't You Glad You're You (A) 14. Aren't You Glad You're You (B) 15. The Bells Of St. Mary's (A) 16. The Bells Of St. Mary's (B) 17. Day By Day 18. Prove It By The Things You Do 19. Symphony 20. Mighty Lak' A Rose (W73212-A) 21. The Sweetest Story Ever Told 22. Mighty Lak' A Rose (WX73214-A)

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 41 Jonzo JZCD-41 UK £10.60

1. It's The Same Old Shillelagh 2. McNamara's Band 3. Dear Old Donegal 4. Who Threw The Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder? (A) 5. Who Threw The Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder? (B) 6. J'Attendrai (I'll Be Yours) 7. Till The Clouds Roll By 8. We'll Gather Lilacs (A) 9. We'll Gather Lilacs (B) 10. Sioux City Sue 11. You Sang My Love Song To Somebody Else (A) 12. You Sang My Love Song To Somebody Else (B) 13. All Through The Day 14. Ol' Man River (A) 15. Ol' Man River (B) 16. Ol' Man River (?) 17. I've Told Every Little Star 18. Blue (And Broken-Hearted) 19. After You've Gone (A) 20. After You've Gone (?) 21. Personality 22. Pinetop's Boogie Woogie 23. On The Sunny Side Of The Street



45 titles this time around with the eclectic mix that comes from this series' strict adherence to the chronology of Bing's recordings. The mid-40s were a mixed time for Bing in the recording studio. I've heard people make strong arguments for "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" being Bing's worst ever recording, but on the other hand, titles such as "J'Attendrai" and "Till The Clouds Roll By" are real gems – and until now, hard to find. These two titles join "Mighty Lak' A Rose", "In The Land Of Beginning Again", "We'll Gather Lilacs", "You Sang My Love Song ..", "All Through The Day" and "I've Told Every Little Star" in making their digital debut. Much of the content of the two CDs is sourced from test pressings, which give great, crackle free quality. Highly recommended and available from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD, UK.

Speaking of songs that have not appeared on CD before, ***Barry Whittingham****, El Rancho Grande, 25c Garton Close, Nottingham NG8 8RZ, UK has a five-CD set available that contains each of Bing's recordings from 1944 to 1955 that have yet to appear on a commercial CD. So anyone who can't wait for the Jonzos can get ahead of the game via Barry. Price is £15.*

Crooner's Clowning **EMI Gold 3301122** **UK** **£6.00**

This CD primarily features Bing, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin in a series of radio sketches, in which Bob Hope and Jerry Lewis are unsurprisingly prominent. The Crosby tracks are as follows:

1. Sandsong and the Crosby Story - Bing, Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis
2. Sinatra v Crosby – Bing, Frank Sinatra and Hope
3. Goodnight Irene – Bing, Frank Sinatra, Hope & Judy Garland

From the snippets I have heard over the web, quality seems reasonable given that this is all radio material.

Johnny Mercer – The Man From Georgia **Jasmine Records JASCD428** **UK** **£8.99**

This 2CD set contains 52 tracks by Johnny Mercer, who was one of the most enduring singer/songwriters of his era. Featuring duets & accompaniments with Bing plus Jo Stafford, The Pied Pipers, Paul Weston, Jack Teagarden, Benny Goodman and others. The set is a mix of commercial recordings with rare and previously unreleased radio broadcasts. The booklet contains discographical information and in-depth liner notes by Geoff Milne. Bing's commercial duets with Johnny Mercer are of course familiar, but the versions included in this set are all from radio shows as follows:

1. Mr. Gallagher & Mr. Shean (from Command Performance, April 5, 1945) 2. On Behalf of the Visiting Firemen (KMH, July 4, 1940) 3. Could Be (KMH, Nov. 17, 1938) 4. Small Fry (Philco, Jan. 12. 1949) 5. Glow Worm (Philco, May 18, 1949)

Bix Restored - Volume 5 **Origin Jazz Library BXCD13** **USA** **$16**

(Bing tracks only listed) Ol' Man River (take 3) - Sweet Sue

This CD is an addendum to the acclaimed 'Bix Restored' series that featured meticulous restoration of every recording on which cornetist Bix Beiderbecke played. The highlight of this volume is three newly discovered alternate takes of recordings featuring Beiderbecke: one by Paul Whiteman's orchestra with Bing and two by Frankie Trumbauer's orchestra, one of which, "Futuristic Rhythm," contains the best and most significant new solo by Bix to be discovered in nearly three decades. The rest of the CD is filled with the reverberations of Bix's influence on his contemporaries between 1927 and 1939 including Bing's 1932 recording of 'Sweet Sue' with Lennie Hayton. The exciting feature for Bing collectors is the hitherto unknown take of 'Ol' Man River' from 1928. The liner notes by Michael Kieffer say:

"Just when we had convinced ourselves that every track was essential, we received an e-mail from Virginia collector Andy Moyer, who had discovered a shellac test of the previously unheard Take 3 of Paul Whiteman's "Ol' Man River." Andy had acquired this pressing from an antiques dealer about nine years ago, and had been waiting patiently for someone to reissue it. After Volume 4 of "Bix Restored" was released, as well as the many other Bix reissues that have come out in the past several years, and none contained the track, he realized that he probably had the only copy. He contacted us and made the disc available to me for digital transfer."

Naturally this caused quite a stir on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum back in October. "Brian W" commented on the bulletin board:

"The sound quality on the track is quite hissy, but very clear — there's no muddiness to it at all. Bing's voice comes through with sparkling clarity. There are slight variations in his vocal that reveal it to be a different take. He seems to get behind the beat towards the end, especially on "I'm tired of livin', feared of dyin'." Also, on the first "rollin' along, rollin' along" he sounds perhaps slightly out of key. The release take is a better performance. The sound on the disc as a whole is very comparable to Jonzo. In fact, they say in the liner notes that John R.T. Davies actually supplied his digital masters of many tracks for use in this new series... so some Bing tracks in 'Bix Restored' probably are the exact same transfer as in the Jonzo series, with probably further tweaking. The other Bing track on this disc is "Sweet Sue, Just You," which sounds beautiful, though I haven't compared it to Jonzo."

To order, send check or money order to Origin Jazz Library, PMB 333, 1534 N. Moorpark Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360, USA. Credit card orders (Visa & Mastercard only): from the OJL website (http://www.originjazz.com/) *(order from New Release page).*

All of which takes us into the Christmas releases. Little if anything new here of course and the most interesting release that has come to light so far is this.

Bing Crosby's White Christmas in Story and Song **Madacy 51393** **USA** **$10.00**

Disc 1: 1. Silent Night 2. Adeste Fideles 3. White Christmas 4. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 5. Faith Of Our Fathers 6. I'll Be Home For Christmas 7. Jingle Bells (with the Andrews Sisters) 8. Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town (with the Andrews Sisters) 9. Silver Bells 10. It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas 11. Christmas In Killarney 12. Mele Kalikimaka (with the Andrews Sisters)

Disc 2: 1. How Lovely Is Christmas 2. There Have Been Almost 2000 Christmases 3. An Axe, An Apple And A Buckskin Jacket 4. Now This Cabin Was So Remote... 5. Boy At A Window 6. All Of A Sudden Young Jethro Heard... 7. Young Jethro Swung His Mighty Axe 8. Soon The Cleared Field Looked Mighty Fine... 9. Johnny Appleseed 10.... And Sure Enough There Was

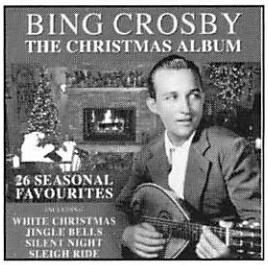
Dan'l Boone! 11. Incident On Roger's Creek 12. Well, Of Course! Young Jethro Thought... 13. How Lovely Is Christmas (reprise)

Copy of this not to hand but the tracks listing suggests a combination of familiar Decca titles with Bing's 1957 storybook album "How Lovely Is Christmas", which is less commonly seen around.

Bing Crosby's Christmas Anthology **Stardust Records 1496** **USA** **$12.00**

1. White Christmas 2. Silent Night 3. Jingle Bells (radio) 4. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 5. Holiday Inn Medley: Happy Holiday / Come To Holiday Inn 6. Let's Start The New Year Right 7. I'll Be Home For Christmas 8. Adeste Fideles 9. The Christmas Song 10. Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow 11. Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer 12. Silver Bells (with Ella Fitzgerald) 13. White Christmas (with Ella Fitzgerald) 14. Joy To The World (1955 version) 15. The First Noel (1955) 16. Away In A Manger (1955) 17. Deck The Halls (1955) 18. O Little Town Of Bethlehem (1955)

Bing Crosby - The Christmas Album **Platinum PLATCD1358** **UK** **£3.99**



1. White Christmas 2. Jingle Bells (with the Andrews Sisters) 3. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town (with the Andrews Sisters) 4. It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas 5. Adeste Fideles 6. Silent Night 7. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 8. I'll Be Home For Christmas 9. Silver Bells 10. Mele Kalikimaka (with the Andrews Sisters) 11. Christmas In Killarney 12. Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer 13. Medley: (A) Good King Wenceslas (B) Away In A Manger (C) I Saw Three Ships 14. Little Jack Frost Get Lost 15. Sleigh Ride 16. Twelve Days Of Christmas (with the Andrews Sisters) 17. The Christmas Song 18. Snow 19. Happy Holiday 20. Let's Start The New Year Right 21. The First Noel

Bing Crosby & Friends – Christmas Special **Blumountain 90730** **USA** **$8.99**

1. Jingle Bells 2. Silver Bells 3. Mistletoe & Holly 4. Deck The Halls 5. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town 6. The Christmas Song 7. Jingle Bell Swing 8. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 9. O Little Town Of Bethlehem 10. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing 11. Adeste Fideles 12. Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer 13. White Christmas 14. Away In A Manger 15. Silent Night 16. That Christmas Feeling.

Three rather more standard items here, the third of which appears be to be largely drawn from Bing's 1957 Christmas TV show with Frank Sinatra – which of course appeared in colour on DVD last year.

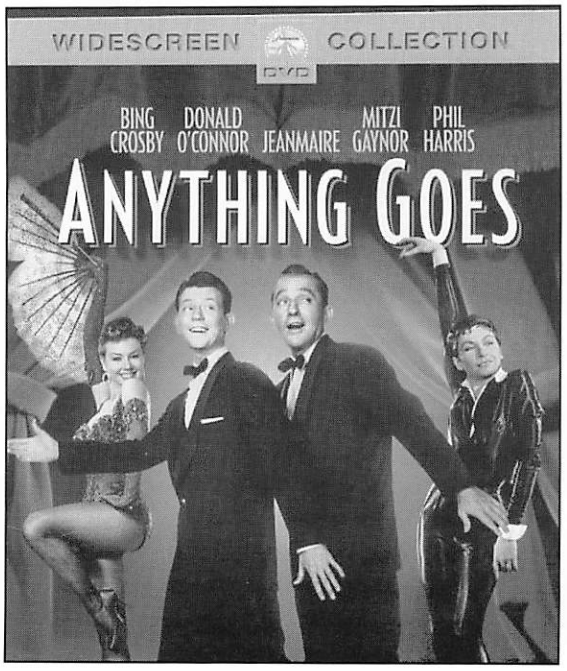
Last, and quite definitely least, ***Christmas Remixed - Vol. 2*** *is a US release by Six Degrees Records that has Bing's commercial version of "White Christmas" plus his radio duet with Ella Fitzgerald on "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" remixed, or to be more precise, desecrated. 'Nuff said!*

The re-issue of the Musical Autobiography set that I mentioned last time duly took place on November 7 and see the separate feature for details about how to obtain this keenly awaited album.

Many USA members have problems in obtaining imported CDs and Greg Van Beek has suggested that those having difficulty should try Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone:1-800-742-6663) http://www.worldsrecords.com/

DVD

The Road To: Complete Collection (7 discs) **Universal 8236370** **UK (Region 2)** **£49.99**



I have to confess to some confusion around this set, which I have seen billed as both a four-feature and seven-feature set. It appears to be all seven of the Road films, together for the first time on one box set (and of course, it was only the last one "The Road To Hong Kong" that featured the word "The" in the title). However, the cover of the box – the image marketed is correct – appears to be from an earlier set that had just the first four films! Confused? So am I. Most of us have the films now on DVD anyway, but if you going for this, check it out thoroughly first.

Anything Goes **Paramount Widescreen DVD Collection 05513** **USA (Region 1)** **$14.99**

This is Bing's 1956 remake of his 1936 film, and generally held to be inferior in just about every way. This is colour of course, and some additional songs from Cahn and Van Heusen that supplement the original Cole Porter score. No extras, alas, not even the original trailer, but a good example of Bing at the end of his musical comedy period.

Two other instalments to mention briefly in passing. ***The Ed Sullivan Show – A Christmas Classic*** *is a compilation set that includes a Bing appearance whilst* ***The Looney Tunes Golden Collection Vol 3*** *has two cartoons that parody Bing, "The Coo-Coo Nut Grove" and "Swooner*

Crooner" – together with lots more Hollywood parodies.

Our friend George O'Reilly in Dublin, who was the man behind Bing's 1966 TV show there, 'A Little Bit Of Irish', tells us that a pristine master has been discovered and is scheduled for imminent release. Watch this space!

VIDEO

It's something of a technological throwback to be reviewing video releases, which are in any event, something of a rare beast. However, it would be remiss of me not to draw attention to a series of releases by Nostalgia Family Video (http://www.nostalgiafamilyvideo.com/) which features complete Hollywood Palace shows from 1964 to 1971. Snippets of these shows have been around before, but I think I am correct in saying that the whole show, including commercials, is much rarer. Quality is not first generation but that said, its pretty good. Early shows are black and white but the six that I obtained were all in colour. Not the best of Bing by any means (see "Whatever happened to C.K Dexter Haven?" elsewhere in this issue) but for UK readers especially, this is a welcome chance to see the Hollywood Palace for the first time.

WHAT'S ON THE WEB?

By far the most interesting item on the web this quarter was the auction of a series of letters, photographs and other related documents about the making of "High Society". Malcolm Macfarlane's piece elsewhere in this issue tells you more. The collection had a minimum bid of $10,000 against it on eBay … with no takers.

In similar vein, in price terms at least, was this item:

Bing Crosby at the Delmar Races 8/27/38 NBC: Line

Rare 16" Aluminum Transcription Disc of Bing Crosby at the Delmar Races, only one in existence, approx 8min. Bing talks with the announcer, about his horses and his new upcoming Radio show, this recording was made for Bing Crosby. This recording was in Bing's personal collection in Hollywood for many years. Bing gave this 16" recording to a friend of mine who custom recorded material for Bing.

The starting price for this one was a mere $5,000 … again, with no takers. I guess we must all be saving up for Christmas! Make it a good one.

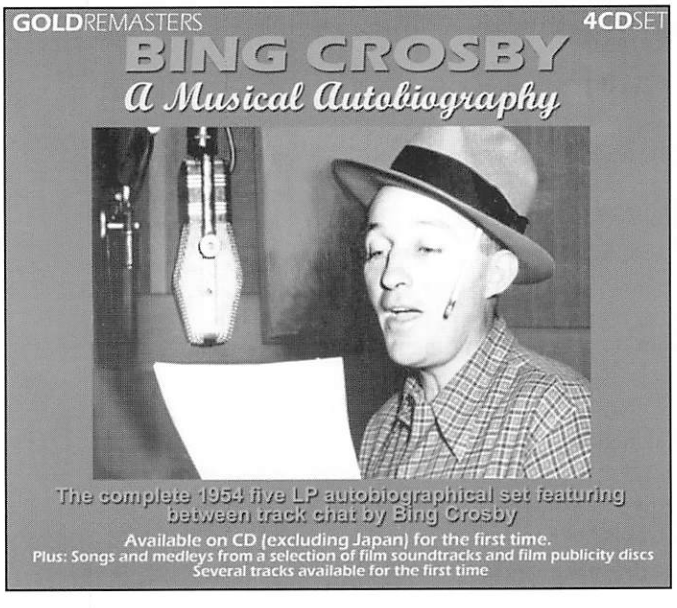
Ken Crossland http://www.kencrossland.co.uk

(Editor: Thanks Ken for your usual comprehensive roundup. Fancy the unknown track of 'Ol' Man River' turning up! Whatever next? Now here are the details of this exciting new release from Avid.)

Bing Crosby - A Musical Autobiography

4CD AMBX147 (5022810214724) RELEASED ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2005

The publicity material from Avid reads as follows:


GOLDREMASTERS
4CDSET
BING CROSBY
A Musical Autobiography
The complete 1954 five LP autobiographical set featuring between track chat by Bing Crosby
Available on CD (excluding Japan) for the first time.
Plus: Songs and medleys from a selection of film soundtracks and film publicity discs
Several tracks available for the first time

"Released by Decca in 1954 to celebrate their 20th anniversary and to pay tribute to their most successful star....."Bing Crosby: A Musical Autobiography", a lavish 5 x LP Box Set forms the backbone of AVID's latest 4CD set in the Gold Re-masters series. The Musical Autobiography contains 49 re-recordings and 40 originals all linked by Bing's charming commentary. The re-recordings were felt necessary at the time due to what was deemed the "dated" quality of the originals. The set is a fascinating trip through Bing's career up to the early 50's and covers all musical styles from country, ballads, jazz, Irish to religious songs, comedy, duets and of course Christmas favourites!

Our Box Set also includes music from two of Bing's many films *Paris Honeymoon* and *The Star Maker* and broadcasts from Bing's popular radio show where he was regularly attracting 50 million listeners every week!!

Finally on CD4 we have some interesting historical

items including songs from all the soundtracks Bing recorded for famed director Mack Sennett in the 1930's including the infamous sound of the pipe organ used to back Bing when he was in dispute with the musicians union."

TRACK LISTING

CD1:

1. Muddy Water 2. Mississippi Mud 3. My Kinda Love 4. I Surrender Dear 5. It Must Be True 6. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams 7. Out Of Nowhere 8. Just One More Chance 9. Stardust 10. Sweet And Lovely 11. Where The Blue Of The Night 12. Paradise 13. Please 14. Just An Echo In The Valley 15. I Don't Stand A Ghost Of A Chance 16. Learn To Croon 17. Down The Old Ox Road 18. Thanks 19. Black Moonlight 20. The Day You Came Along 21. After Sundown 22. Temptation 23. Love Thy Neighbour 24. May I? 25. Love In Bloom 26. I Love You Truly 27. June In January 28. Love Is Just Around The Corner 29. It's Easy To Remember 30. Soon 31. I Wished On The Moon 32. Silent Night 33. I'm An Old Cowhand 34. I Can't Escape From You 35. Song Of The Islands 36. Pennies From Heaven 37. Sweet Leilani 38. Blue Hawaii 39. The One Rose 40. There's A Gold Mine In The Sky 41. My Heart Is Taking Lessons 42. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams

CD2:

1. Small Fry 2. Mexicali Rose 3. That Sly Old Gentleman 4. Allá En El Rancho Grande 5. Tumbling Tumbleweeds 6. Only Forever 7. Did Your Mother Come From Ireland? 8. Yes Indeed 9. Brahms' Lullaby 10. You Are My Sunshine 11. The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid 12. Deep In The Heart Of Texas 13. Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie 14. Walking The Floor Over You 15. White Christmas 16. Moonlight Becomes You 17. Road To Morocco 18. Sunday, Monday Or Always 19. Pistol Packin' Mama 20. San Fernando Valley 21. I'll Be Seeing You 22. Swinging On A Star 23. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 24. Don't Fence Me In 25. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta 26. It's Been A Long Long Time 27. The Bells Of St. Mary's

CD3:

1. Put It There, Pal 2. MacNamara's Band 3. Sioux City Sue 4. Begin The Beguine 5. South America, Take It Away 6. Blue Skies 7. Alexander's Ragtime Band 8. The Whiffenpoof Song 9. Now Is The Hour 10. Galway Bay 11. Far Away Places 12. Mule Train 13. Dear Hearts And Gentle People 14. Rock Of Ages 15. Sunshine Cake 16. Play A Simple Melody 17. Sam's Song 18. Gone Fishin' 19. In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening 20. Y'All Come 21. Bing Crosby signs off

'Paris Honeymoon' - selection

22. Banter between Ken Carpenter and Bing Crosby 23. The Funny Old Hills 24. Banter between Ken Carpenter and Bing Crosby 25. You're A Sweet Little Headache 26. Banter between Ken Carpenter and Bing Crosby 27. I Have Eyes

'The Star Maker' - selection

28. Banter between Ken Carpenter and Bing Crosby 29. An Apple For The Teacher 30. Banter between Ken Carpenter and Bing Crosby 31. Still The Bluebird Sings 32. Banter between Ken Carpenter and Bing Crosby 33. A Man And His Dream

CD 4:

'I Surrender Dear'

1. I Surrender Dear 2. Out Of Nowhere 3. At Your Command

'One More Chance'

4. Magic C.O.D. (parody) 5. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams 6. I'd Climb The Highest Mountain 7. Just One More Chance

'Dream House'

8. When I Take My Sugar To Tea 9. It Must Be True 10. Dream House

'Billboard Girl'

11. Were You Sincere? 12. For You

'Sing, Bing, Sing'

13. In My Hideaway 14. Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea 15. Lovable 16. Snuggled On Your Shoulder

'Blue Of The Night'

17. My Silent Love 18. Auf Wiedersehen, My Dear 19. Ev'ry Time My Heart Beats 20. Where The Blue Of The Night

'The Big Broadcast'

21. Banter between Stuart Erwin and Bing Crosby 22. Here Lies Love 23. Announcement by Sam Coslow 24. Please

'Please'

25. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me 26. I Don't Stand A Ghost Of A Chance With You 27. Please

'She Loves Me Not'

28. Love In Bloom 29. Straight From The Shoulder 30. I'm Hummin', I'm Whistlin', I'm Singin'

'Two For Tonight'

31. Two For Tonight

'Doctor Rhythm'

32. Introduction by Gayne Whitman 33. This Is My Night To Dream 34. On The Sentimental Side 35. Only A Gypsy Knows 36. My Heart Is Taking Lessons

'The Birth Of The Blues'

37. The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid 38. My Melancholy Baby

'The Big Broadcast'

39. Banter between Stuart Erwin and Bing Crosby 40. Here Lies Love

Tracks 21 to 40 on CD4 are taken from publicity discs and radio promotions.

The normal price is £17.49 but the special price for readers of BING magazine (you must mention The

International Club Crosby) is £14.50 (including postage in the UK). Contact:

AVID Ltd. 10 Metro Centre, Dwight Road, Watford, WD18 9UF, United Kingdom Tel: 01923 281281 E-mail: info@avidgroup.co.uk, website: http://www.avidgroup.co.uk/acatalog/

Festival Films videos now available on DVD-R

USA & Canadian members in particular will be aware of the excellent videos put out by Festival Films over the years. Ron Hall tells me that all of his special Bing Crosby Collection videos are now available on DVD-R as well for $25 with the exception of the "27th. Annual Academy Awards" DVD which is $15. Many include bonuses not offered before. UK members should note that the DVDs are in the NTSC format. Here are the details:

1. Bing Crosby's ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD
(85 min.) Original documentary by Bob DeFlores and Ron Hall about Bing's rise to fame from 1925-1933. Included is Bing's rare Paramount short **"Please"** released in 1933.

2. BING AT SENNETT
(115 *min., 1931-33)* All six of Bing Crosby's Mack Sennett shorts, from the Bob DeFlores collection.

3. Golfing With BING AND BOB
(95 min.) Home movie footage, "Swing With Bing" (1940), "Don't Hook Now" (1942) and excerpts from "Honor Caddie" (1949) with Bing and Bob, plus The Christopher's Show **"Faith, Hope and Hogan"** with Bing and Bob, Ben Hogan and Phil Harris, and the rare **"Rough But Hopeful"** (1946) with Bing, Bob and others.

4. Bing Crosby SURPRISE PACKAGE
(110 *min.)* Bing Crosby and Perry Como sing a medley of songs. Edward R. Murrow visits Bing at home. Wayne and Shuster in an hour TV special pay tribute to Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. And more!

5. On the Road with BING AND BOB
(100 *min.) 5* B&B Trailers, "Road to Home" (1945), "Command Performance" (1944), "The Fifth Freedom" (1951), "You Can Change the World" and "The Road to Peace" (1949, with Ann Blyth).

6. Bing Crosby CAVALCADE
(90 min.) 3 Theatrical Trailers, "Meet the Crosby's" (1945), "Coast Guard Short" (1945), Out-takes from the "Bing Crosby Show" (1964-65), "The One and Only Bing" and Bing's first TV Show - "The GE Show" (1954).

7. THE EDSEL SHOW
10/13/57 Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Rosemary Clooney. **Bonus: "Goldie, Fields and Glide"** episode of the JACK BENNY SHOW. **Bonus: "Hollywood Victory Caravan"** (105 *min.)*

8. OLDSMOBILE SPECIAL
09/29/59 TV Special with Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Peggy Lee. **Bonus: Frank Sinatra TIMEX Show** 10/21/59 With Bing & Dean Martin. (110 min.)

9. "THE BING CROSBY SHOW" — Nov. 7, 1963
TV Special starring Bing Crosby, Buddy Ebsen, Caterina Valente, Andre Previn, and the Young Americans. **Bonus: "Bing's Britain"** (1976) and 3 cartoons with Bing Crosby caricatures! (95 *min.)*

10. "THE BING CROSBY SHOW" — 2 TV Specials!
Oct. 5, 1960 (55 *min.)* Bing, Johnny Mercer, Rosemary Clooney, Carol Lawrence.
May 14, 1962 (55 *min.)* Bing, Bob Hope, Edie Adams, Smothers Brothers, Gary Crosby.

11. "THE BING CROSBY SHOW" — 2 TV Specials!
Dec. 11, 1961 (55 *min.)* Bing's First hour Christmas Show was filmed in London.
Feb. 15, 1964 (55 *min.)* We dubbed this the "All-Star Show" since all these guests appear with Bing: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Kathryn Crosby, Bob Hope, Rosemary Clooney and Peter Gennaro.

12. "27th Annual Academy Awards"
March 30, 1955, TV broadcast of the Oscar award show for 1954 films. Bob Hope MCs. Bing appears for six minutes clowning with Bob and handing out awards. (95 min.) Note: This DVD is only $15.

Some great packages there! Festival Films can be contacted at:
Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, (Phone: 952-470-2172, email: fesfilms@aol.com, website: www.fesfilms.com/bing.html)

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